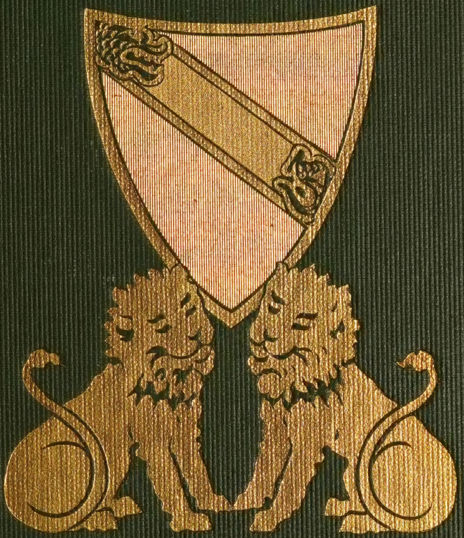

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HISTORY

OF THE

MOORISH EMPIRE IN EUROPE

HISTORY
OF THE
MOORISH EMPIRE
IN EUROPE

BY

S. P. SCOTT

AUTHOR OF "THROUGH SPAIN"

> Corduba famosa locuples de nomine dicta,
> Inclyta deliciis, rebus quoque splendida cunctis
>
> HROSWITHA, PASSIO S. PELAGII

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA & LONDON
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
1904

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Published March, 1904

Printed by J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, U. S. A.

PREFACE

THIS work has engaged the attention of the author for more than twenty years. Its object is an attempt to depict the civilization of that great race whose achievements in science, literature, and the arts have been the inspiration of the marvellous progress of the present age. The review of this wide-spread influence, whose ramifications extend to the limits of both Europe and America, has required the introduction of some matter apparently extraneous, but which, when considered in its general relations to the subject, will be found to be not foreign to the purpose of these volumes.

The list of authorities cited does not, by any means, include all that have been examined. Many, from which comparatively few facts have been gleaned, have been omitted. Among the works that have been made the subject of careful research, and have yielded most valuable information—in addition to the Arabic and Spanish chronicles—are those of Al-Makkari, Romey, Rosseuw St. Hilaire, Le Bon, Sédillot, and Casiri. The utter unreliability of Conde, who compiled the only detailed history of the Moors of Spain, is well known, and his statements have not been adopted except when amply verified. The histories of the late R. Dozy, Professor in the University of Leyden, which for learning, accuracy, impartiality, and critical acumen have few rivals in this branch of literature, have been the principal dependence of the author, who gladly takes this opportunity to acknowledge his obligations to the labors of one whose genius and attainments are recognized by every Oriental scholar in Europe.

It may seem a work of supererogation to traverse once more a portion of the ground covered by Irving and Prescott. The final episode in the fall of a great empire could not, however, with propriety be omitted. Moreover, the accounts of these two famous writers swarm with errors, as any one can readily discover who will consult the chronicles of Pulgar and Bernaldez, eye-witnesses, and consequently the most reliable authorities concerning what they relate. The quotations of Irving, it may be added, indicate a surprising want of familiarity with the Castilian language.

That writer best fulfils the office of an historian who passes before the mind of the reader, as in a panorama, not merely the more striking events of war and diplomacy, but circumstances often regarded as unimportant, yet which illustrate, as no others can do, the condition of the masses as well as the policy of the prince; which indicate the condition of public and private morals; which exhibit the effects of domestic manners, of ingenious inventions, of literary progress and artistic development; which reveal the unfolding of national taste—which present, in short, the portraiture of every material and intellectual feature necessary to the elucidation of the character, the aspirations, and the foibles of a people. With this end in view, sources of information usually regarded as beneath the dignity of an historical work have been drawn on for material in the following pages.

The author cherishes no feeling of animosity towards the Spanish people. He remembers with pleasure a long sojourn among them. He can never forget the dignified courtesy of their men, the incomparable grace and fascinations of their women. Their faults are those entailed by a pernicious inheritance and a corrupt religion, which have perverted their principles, destroyed their power, and tarnished their glory.

As the greater part of this book was written before 1898, any unfavorable criticism of Spanish politics or manners which it contains must be attributed to a desire to adhere to historic truth, and not to a contemptible prejudice engendered by our unfortunate "War of Humanity."

PHILADELPHIA, 1903.

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HISTORY

OF THE

MOORISH EMPIRE IN EUROPE

CHAPTER I

THE ANCIENT ARABIANS

B.C. 2500—A.D. 614

Topography of Arabia—Its History—Influence of Other Nations—Ancient Civilization—Commerce—Persistence of Customs and Language—Character of the Bedouin—His Independence—His Predatory Instincts—Power of Tribal Connection—War the Normal Condition of Existence in the Desert—The Virtues and Vices of the Arab—Blood-Revenge and its Destructive Consequences—Absence of Caste—Condition of Woman—Marriage—Religion—Astral Worship—Idolatry—Phallicism—Human Sacrifices—Importance and Power of the Jews—Christianity in Arabia—Poetry, its Subjects and Character—The Moallakat—Popularity of the Arab Poet—His License—Influence of Arabic Civilization and Culture on Subsequent Ages.

Few countries of the globe present to the eye of the traveller so desolate, so forbidding an aspect as that vast and arid peninsula which, embracing an area of more than a million square miles, stretches away through twenty-four degrees of latitude, from the confines of the Syrian Desert to the shores of the Indian Ocean. Its surface, while far from possessing the monotonous character with which popular fancy is accustomed to invest it, is, for the greater part of its extent, destitute of those physical advantages which tempt either the cupidity or the enterprise of man.

Its coasts are low and unhealthy. Its harbors are few and unsafe. Its mineral resources are to this day unexplored and unknown. Its impenetrable deserts, guarded by a fierce and martial population, have always set at defiance the best-matured plans of invasion and conquest. In the principality of Yemen, appropriately named The Happy, the cultivation of the soil has flourished from time immemorial, but in almost every other province the returns of agricultural labor are discouraging and unremunerative. Illimitable wastes of sand, over which sweeps the deadly blast of the simoom; mountains, bald, craggy, and volcanic, whose slopes are destitute of every trace of vegetable life; plains strewn with blocks of tufa and basalt; valleys dotted here and there with stunted shrubs, or encrusted with a saline deposit similar to that upon the shores of the Dead Sea; a soil impregnated with nitre; such are, and have been from prehistoric times, the physical features of the Arabian Peninsula. No stream worthy of the name of river, dispensing wealth and fertility in its winding course to the sea, flows through this dreary and inhospitable land. Wherever a spring was found, a permanent settlement arose, and the black tents of the Bedouin gave place to huts of sun-dried bricks, while the dignity of the sheik, who now aspired to the title of prince, was satisfied with a dwelling superior to those of his subjects only in point of size. The oasis, generally suggestive of shady groves and purling streams, is often, in reality, nothing more than the dry bed of a mountain torrent, along whose borders a little withered vegetation furnishes the hardy camel with pasture, and where a scanty supply of brackish water can, by laborious digging, be obtained. Overhead glitters a sky of brass, unflecked by a single cloud, and, morning and evening, the rays of the sun, mellowed and refracted by the vapors of the earth, clothe every elevation with scarlet, azure, and violet tints which, blended in exquisite harmony, rival the splendors of the rainbow; developing, under the effects of radiation, optical illusions and charming pictures of the mirage, attributed by superstitious ignorance to the influence of enchantment. The unbroken stillness of the Desert, the wide expanse of uninhabited territory, produce a sense of mental depression, accompanied by an apprehension of danger from the convulsions of nature and the violence of man, which no experience seems able to remove; affecting even the sturdy camel-driver, familiar with these solitudes from childhood, who shudders as he urges his string of panting beasts over the drifted sand-heaps and through the mountain fastness, the reputed haunt of evil genii and the vantage ground from whence the murderous banditti oft beset the caravan. So deeply-rooted and tenacious is this feeling that the Arab regards a journey successfully performed as just cause for congratulation, and indeed not inferior to a triumph, as is indicated by his familiar proverb, “ Travel is a victory.”

The modern geographical division of Arabia into The Stony, The Desert, The Happy is arbitrary, and unknown to the people the boundaries of whose country it purports to establish. The distinctions between the various tribes of the Peninsula have always been determined by mode of life, habits, and tradition rather than by the accident of locality; have been, in fact, rather personal than territorial. This peculiarity is the result of an extraordinary persistence of a national type which neither a new physical environment, nor the change of political and economic conditions, nor the lapse of centuries has been able to modify sensibly, still less to eradicate completely. Hence has arisen the division of the Arabian people into two classes, nomadic and sedentary, the only one universally recognized by them, and whose line of demarcation has always been sharply defined.

The primordial story of Arabia is lost in the unfathomable darkness of antiquity. The annals of no people are involved in more uncertainty or present greater difficulties in their investigation than those of the Bedouins, as the popular accounts which we possess of their early history bear unquestionable indications of recent date and fictitious origin. Ignorant of the art of writing for centuries before the time of Mohammed, their traditions were orally transmitted, and, in addition to being necessarily subject to all the defects of this mode of communication, were colored by that love of exaggeration and falsehood which seems to be an integral part of the Oriental character. The meagre hints which can be gleaned from these unsatisfactory materials are all that we can rely upon in the almost hopeless attempt to construct a chronological and historical outline of pre-Islamic events. The statements of Moslem writers concerning these events must be subjected to rigid criticism. They suppressed many facts, and condemned indiscriminately the practices of their heathen ancestors; although they knew that the Prophet drew his inspiration largely from this source, and that Islamism could never have been established without the acceptance of many of these idolatrous ceremonies in all their integrity. As far as can at present be determined by the aid of the imperfect and suspicious data at our command, and by a comparison of the physical and mental characteristics of surrounding nations, Arabia has long been a base of extensive emigration, chiefly into Central Asia; while her southern and eastern provinces have, from the days when some famished Bedouin first discovered the marvellous fertility enjoyed by the Valley of the Nile, been the prolific source from whence Egypt recruited her diminishing population.

On the other hand, the influence of neighboring countries upon Arabia has been attended, in its turn, with consequences of the greatest importance. It was peculiarly fortunate that her geographical situation rendered her maritime cities—and in a still greater degree her interior settlements—entrepôts for the distribution of the luxuries of the East and West. Of the latter, in ancient times, and indeed until superseded by the doubtful advantages of Mecca, Petra was the most remarkable. The latter was a veritable troglodytic city. Its dwellings, excavated in the solid rock, disclose by their vast extent that at one time they must have sheltered a population of at least a hundred and sixty thousand souls. Nor was Petra the only town of this kind in Northern Arabia. Many others almost rivalled it in size and opulence, in the splendid architecture of their temples, in the vast ramifications of their commercial interests, in the sybaritic luxury of their inhabitants. Under such conditions a high degree of civilization must necessarily have been reached, which, however, had disappeared with the decline of Phœnician influence at a period long before the dawn of the Christian era. From an epoch not improbably coeval with the establishment of the first Egyptian dynasty there had been an almost incessant passing and repassing of strangers, attracted by the profits of the Ethiopian and Indian trade, upon the highways, which in every direction traversed the Peninsula. This continual intercourse with foreigners, the curious information of distant lands which the latter imparted, the mysterious dogmas of unknown faiths which they professed, their extensive learning and polished manners, insensibly enlarged the sphere of observation and activity, developed the mental faculties, and softened the rudeness of the wild tribes of the Desert. Many of these traders were Phœnicians and Jews whom a common origin, indicated, among other traits, by a striking similarity of language, brought at once into familiar and intimate contact with the Arabs. The commercial intercourse of Arabia with Egypt is known from inscriptions to have existed for thirty-five hundred years before Christ, and that with Phœnicia may, not improbably, have been of equal antiquity.

No greater contrast can be imagined than that presented by the respective lives of the Arabs and their neighbors and kindred, the denizens of the Valley of the Nile. The actions of the former, like those of all pastoral nations, were irregular, uncertain, capricious. The existence of the latter was controlled by the unvarying phenomena of the Great River, whose influence was perceptible in every phase of political, religious, and social life; whose inundations were symbolical of prosperity, and whose rise was announced by the celestial messenger Sirius, the most magnificent star in the heavens. The subjects of the Pharaohs were dependent upon Arabia for the gums and aromatics so extensively used in embalming; and these precious substances, which must have been produced far more abundantly then than now, were also exported to Phœnicia and Palestine, whence considerable quantities annually found their way into Europe to be consumed in sacrificial ceremonies, in the service of medicine, and in the ostentatious pomp of patrician luxury.

The maritime and agricultural advantages possessed by the southern coast of the Peninsula—designated by the Romans as Arabia the Happy, and afterwards, by the natives, as Yemen, "The Country on the Right Hand" (because the speaker was supposed to stand at Mecca)—had enabled that region to attain to a degree of prosperity and civilization unknown to the pastoral settlements of the interior. Nothing can now be ascertained concerning the early history of Yemen, the royal genealogies of whose sovereigns nevertheless include a period of twenty-two hundred years. Nor can speculation, with any degree of probability, assign even an approximate date to the beginning of its commercial relations with the East. Not only did the bold and adventurous spirit of the Arabian sailors lead them to the extreme Orient, but their coasting vessels regularly visited the shores of the Persian Gulf and the bays and inlets of the African coast; undertakings far more hazardous, if not more lucrative, than voyages to distant Hindustan. From the latter country the native and foreign merchants introduced, with articles of traffic, many idolatrous practices and dogmas of a corrupt philosophy, destined subsequently to manifest the powerful hold they had obtained upon the popular mind by their incorporation into the creed of Islam.

All classic writers who have written upon the subject agree in attributing great wealth to Southern Arabia, a land familiar to antiquity as Saba, or Sheba. Herodotus, Strabo, and Pliny frequently allude to it as the richest country on the globe. Its agricultural resources, dependent upon a vast and intricate hydraulic system which embraced hundreds of leagues of productive territory, were the principal basis of its prosperity. Its streams were confined by massive walls of masonry of cyclopean dimensions and by great embankments. One of these reservoirs was eighteen miles in circuit and a hundred and twenty feet deep. Its stones were laid in bitumen and bolted together with iron rods. Many others, inferior in dimensions and of not less solid construction, collected and retained the melted snows of the mountains. The flow of water was regulated by sluices, and its apportionment rigidly prescribed by law. This thorough system of irrigation, applied to a soil of prodigious fertility under a tropical sun, eventually produced results rivalling those of the vaunted plantations of Babylonia. An innumerable population, distributed throughout this favored territory in hundreds of cities and villages, carried to its highest perfection the cultivation of the soil. The daily expenses of the royal household were fifteen Babylonian talents, eighty-five thousand five hundred dollars of our money. It is related that Mareb, the capital, stood in a vast expanse of perennial verdure, where the branches of the trees, touching each other, formed a vault of continuous shade over the highways, of such extent that a horseman would require a journey of two months' duration to traverse the cultivated portion of the realm of the monarchs of Saba. One of the latter was the famous Queen Balkis, the friend and admirer of Solomon.

In a region so fortunately situated for commerce, mercantile activity kept pace with agricultural development. The merchants of Saba enjoyed a reputation for shrewdness, ability, wealth, and enterprise not inferior to that of the Phœnicians themselves. They engaged in transactions involving immense pecuniary investments. They despatched great fleets to China. Their caravans traversed the Syrian and African deserts. They exported to Persia annually a thousand talents weight of frankincense. Not only did they purchase directly the commodities in which they dealt, but they also bought and sold extensively on commission. Their warehouses were filled with the rich products of a score of climes; silver vessels; ingots of copper, tin, iron, and lead; honey and wax; silks, ivory, ebony, coral, agates; civet, musk, myrrh, camphor, and other aromatics, some of which were worth many times their weight in gold. Such was their prodigal luxury that only sandal-wood and cinnamon were used as fuel in the preparation of their food. The vegetable kingdom contributed no insignificant share to the commercial wealth of Southern Arabia. Coffee, indigenous to the Peninsula, was exported as a luxury to the provinces of Asia. In that dry climate, where flourished every known variety of cereals, grain could be stored without injury for thirty years. The cotton-plant, the sugar-cane, the cocoa-palm, yielded enormous revenues to those who engaged in their culture. The balsam of Mecca, the gum Arabic, the sap of the *Acacia Vera,* and the famed frankincense were also important articles of export. The country was reputed to be rich in minerals; inexhaustible deposits of salt existed in Saba; gold was found in the mountains; but Arabia produced no iron, which Strabo says in his time was equal in value to the precious metals. The pearl fisheries of the coast, opposite to the Isles of Bahrein, were unrivalled for the beauty and value of their products.

For an unknown period, embracing, however, many centuries, the prosperity of the kingdom of Saba continued. Then it suddenly declined; a general emigration took place, and the former paradise was transformed into an uninhabited desert. The cause of this great and profound change, involving the desolation of a vast region and the dispersion of an entire people, is hidden in obscurity. The puerile fables which attribute it to a threatened inundation from the rupture of a dike are unworthy of notice. It is probable that this calamity was mainly due to the diversion of the caravan traffic to the channels of the Red Sea, to the abandonment of stations, to the cessation of revenue, and to the consequent dearth of the means of subsistence. Foreign wars or domestic convulsions, which, aided by increasing luxury and subsequent weakness, also contributed to drain the resources and exhaust the population of the kingdom, may have hastened the ultimate catastrophe that is supposed to have occurred during the first century of the Christian era.

From this epoch the traditions of the Arabs become more and more confused. Some tribes seem to have emigrated to Mesopotamia, others to have settled in the vicinity of Medina, then called Yathreb, where they intermarried with the Jews already established in that city. We know nothing further of Arabian annals till the promulgation of the faith of Islam began a new chapter in the history of nations. Before the Hegira no date could be fixed with certainty, as there was no chronological system by which to ascertain the year of an historical occurrence, and no public or private records existed to preserve it. But a step beyond the unreliable transmission of past events by tradition were the inscriptions occasionally made upon the shoulder-blades of animals. Not only was the material indispensable to the scribe entirely wanting, but the ability to use it was possessed by only an insignificant number of the people. Among the nomadic Bedouins contempt for literary accomplishments, except that of extemporaneous poetical composition, universally prevailed. Even in the great commercial city of Mecca, at the time of the publication of the Koran, there was but one man who could write. It was not without reason that Mohammed designated the long and obscure period preceding the Hegira, the Age of Ignorance.

Arabia, alone among the countries accessible to the ambition of the powerful sovereigns of antiquity, escaped the humiliation of conquest. The genius of Alexander had planned its subjugation, but death prevented the realization of his vast, perhaps impracticable, design. The legions of Augustus, trained under the discipline of the greatest of the Cæsars, proved unequal to the task of triumphing over a region where the soil, the elements, and the valor of its defenders formed a combination invincible by human prowess. The Persians, for a period of insignificant duration, occupied the western and southern coasts, having previously expelled the Abyssinians, who had invaded and retained a portion of Yemen during the sixth century. No nation, however, was ever able to claim supremacy over any considerable portion of the Arabian Peninsula. For this immunity it was indebted not only to the natural obstacles which defied the advance and the maintenance of an invading army, but also to the superstitious fears with which cunning and credulity had surrounded its name. It was a land of mysterious portents and prodigies, whose borders were guarded by malignant demons; whose deserts, all but impenetrable to the boldest adventurer, were inhabited by cannibal giants and monstrous birds of prey that watched over treasures placed by evil spirits under the spell of enchantment. Every caravan that left Phœnicia for Central Arabia carried quantities of storax, which the Tyrian merchants declared was burnt in the neighborhood of the frankincense shrubs, that its offensive fumes might drive away the winged serpents which were their custodians. The climate was said to be so pestilential that slaves and criminals alone were employed to gather the precious gum, their liberty being conditional upon their success. These politic inventions, implicitly believed by the ignorant, while they insured to the shrewd traders of Phœnicia a monopoly of the valuable products of the Peninsula, exercised no inconsiderable influence over the popular mind of the ancients, and clothed the Desert with terrors which even the reputation and allurements of its prodigious wealth were unable entirely to overcome.

As a result of its exemption from foreign dominion, no other country has preserved the integrity of its customs, its language, and the personality of its inhabitants to such a degree as Arabia. It alone still presents a picture of the government and the domestic economy of patriarchal antiquity. Its manners are those which prevailed centuries before the time of Abraham. The wonderfully sonorous and flexible idiom of the Koran was already formed before the Bible or the Iliad was written. The absolute immobility of the Arabian in his native haunts, contrasted with his ready adaptation to diametrically opposite conditions elsewhere, is one of the most striking anomalies of human character. The influence of Greece and Rome, whose taste in art and maxims of government have left their traces wherever either the valor or the enterprise of those nations has been able to obtain a foothold, is not perceptible in the political or domestic history of Arabia. No ruins of any majestic structure raised by the master-hand of the Athenian or Roman architect have ever been discovered in the great Peninsula, the accounts of whose commercial wealth were matters of popular faith and wonder throughout the ancient world. And, what is probably a more conclusive indication of the permanent absence of foreign influence than any other, however plausible, no name with a Greek or Latin termination has survived in the dialects of those Arabian settlements most intimately associated with the trade of Europe for many centuries.

This inflexibility of national peculiarities becomes invaluable in tracing the causes of the decay and disruption of the great Moslem empires which subsequently dominated so large a portion of the globe. The ethnography of a people who have stamped their characteristics deeply upon succeeding ages; whose customs, laws, and language have, to a certain degree, survived their dominion; the analogy between the religious dogmas which they professed and those which have supplanted them; the play of passions, destructive or beneficent, exhibited by those rulers whom hereditary descent or the accident of fortune raised to supreme authority; the development of the transplanted race, its precocious maturity, the lasting effects of its intellectual supremacy, and its slow but inevitable decline, are circumstances well deserving the attentive scrutiny of the philosophical historian. The absence of reliable information renders impossible an accurate conception of the mental and physical traits of the Arab of two thousand years ago. But, as we know the extreme conservatism of Orientals, their pronounced aversion to change, the obstinate persistence of their traditions, and the general outlines of their character, we may with safety assume that the shepherd who now roams over the desert plateaus of Nejd and Oman is the intellectual counterpart of the Amalekite of the Bible, and that the Arab whose features are sculptured upon the eternal walls of Edfou and Karnak did not differ in any material respect from the predatory Bedouin of to-day. It is a strange anomaly in a land, the greater portion of which, either through the obduracy of Nature or the indolence of its inhabitants, had been for ages condemned to eternal sterility and isolated by sea and desert from contemporaneous civilization, to encounter a race whose genius was capable of at once adapting itself, with equal facility, to the formation and development of an agricultural system surpassing that of any other people, ancient or modern; to the invention of mechanical devices of marvellous ingenuity; to the solution of the most abstruse mathematical problems; to the perfection of a graceful and exquisite order of architecture, unique in design, infinite in detail, remarkable in execution, unrivalled in beauty of ornament; to the protracted investment of cities and the attainment and exercise of that proficiency in the intricate system of military tactics indispensable to success in the art of war; to the foundation and the preservation of empires. A long and tedious apprenticeship is usually required for the attainment to perfection in any of these accomplishments; but the versatile Arab seemed, by intuition, to be able to grasp them all, without previous experience or instruction. In literature, as well, was this pre-eminence of genius disclosed. Poetry was the sole form of literary manifestation appreciated by the Arabic mind; improvisation the only talent it deemed worthy of applause. Even among the most intelligent, nothing deserving of the name of history was preserved; and the genealogies upon which the Arabs prided themselves were merely interminable lists of barbarians of local or tribal celebrity, and dreary catalogues of idols. Yet their predatory hordes effected a great intellectual revolution in every country which submitted to their sway. In addition to their own memorable achievements, they developed and expanded, to the utmost, the mental faculties of their subjects and tributaries. By precept and example, they aroused the emulation and rewarded the efforts of all who struggled to escape from the fetters of ignorance which had been riveted by the superstition and prejudice of ages passed in ignominious servitude. Their conquests in the world of letters offer a far more noble title to renown than the laurels won on fields of appalling carnage or the prestige acquired by the subjugation of vast provinces and kingdoms. To the finest literary productions of modern times does this subtle intellectual power extend. The impress of Arabian genius can be detected in the novels of Boccaccio, in the romances of Cervantes, in the philosophy of Voltaire, in the " Principia" of Newton, in the tragedies of Shakspeare. Its domain is coincident with the boundaries of modern civilization, its influence imperishable in its character.

These far-reaching results are neither derived from spontaneous impulse nor are they of fortuitous origin. They indicate unmistakably a gradual and incessant advance through long periods of time. The inexorable laws which control the destiny of man require a transition through many connected forms, insensibly merging into each other, eventually to effect radical changes in the mental and physical characteristics of individuals and nations. The evolution of a race, like the development of architectural construction, is slow but progressive. The union between the foundation and the superstructure is evident, although the former may not at the first glance be visible. A great distance separates the barbaric sheik of pre-Islamic Arabia and the powerful and enlightened khalifs of Bagdad and Cordova. Yet both the Abbaside and the Ommeyade dynasties traced their lineage directly to the Bedouin robbers, who, each year, waylaid the Mecca caravan. There is no apparent resemblance between the rude structures of prehistoric antiquity and the matchless edifices erected by Athenian genius and skill. It cannot be disputed, however, that the unhewn and misshapen shaft of the cyclopean quarry, which had neither fluting nor volute, base nor capital, was the architectural prototype of the superb columns which adorned the temples of ancient Greece and Rome. In view of the rapid advance of the Arabs under Mohammed's successors, we are forced to concede to their pagan ancestors not only intellectual powers of the highest order, apparently inconsistent with the degraded conditions of savage life, but also an extraordinary capacity for political organization and for the practical application of the principles of every art beneficial to mankind; talents unconsciously formed and dormant through countless generations; a fact which may well excite the admiration of every scholar, and of which history in previous or subsequent times affords no example.

The Arabs, despite their apparent barbarism, occupy no contemptible place in the annals of antiquity. They conquered Egypt, and, under the dynasty of the Shepherd Kings, governed that country for many centuries. One of their race, enlisted as a private soldier, was, by a series of rapid promotions, raised to the throne of the Roman empire. Their cavalry fought with conspicuous distinction in the imperial armies. More than once the valor of Bedouin mercenaries determined the fate of the Persian monarchy. They constituted the greater part of the forces of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, in her desperate struggle with Aurelian. Under whatever banner they served, their courage and tenacity of purpose were never questioned. It must be admitted, however, that their fidelity was not beyond suspicion, and that, only too frequently, the name of Arab was a synonym of treachery.

The most remarkable peculiarity of Arabian life is its restless energy. The continuance of this condition from primeval times explains many of the distinctive traits so prominent in the character of the race. The well-known relation existing between commercial activity and civilized habits was powerless to change the existence of the nomadic Arab. His predatory instinct was always stronger than the attractions of sedentary comfort and opulence. Familiarity with Oriental luxury only increased his contempt for those who enjoyed it. His vagrant impulse carried him everywhere. He fearlessly penetrated the mysterious depths of the Libyan Desert. He served in the armies of Hindustan. He was enrolled in the Prætorian

Guards, where his natural rapacity was gratified and stimulated by the donatives received for the ignominious sale of the imperial throne. For a considerable time before the advent of Mohammed, an increasing spirit of unrest had characterized the Arabs. With roving and predatory tastes, there could, of course, be no attachment to the soil,—a condition, indeed, regarded by the Bedouin as a badge of servitude. It required centuries to correct this prejudice; but no change of residence, no association with populations long civilized, or even the adoption of a new polity, the admonitions of a new religion, and the powerful attractions of affluence and ease, were ever able to eradicate the spirit of individual independence and tribal hostility which were the most prominent features of the Arabian character. These national peculiarities repeatedly threatened the existence of both the Eastern and Western Khalifates in the days of their greatest splendor. They intensified the bitterness which marked the struggles of rival princes for empire. They promoted and sustained the feuds of the nobility. They lurked under the tattered garments of the infuriated zealot. In the minds of the populace these feelings were scarcely ever concealed. They manifested themselves continually in personal quarrels, in the violence of mobs, in religious tumults, in insurrections, in the commission of frightful atrocities. They were potent factors in the destruction of mediæval Moslem civilization wherever established, and especially is this true of the Hispano-Arab domination, the most advanced, if not the most despotic, of them all. The temperament of the Arab, impetuous, fiery, vindictive, though admirably fitted for conquest, was deficient in those qualities of broad statesmanship and impartial discrimination vitally essential to the security and maintenance of government. Those who enjoyed the highest privileges of individual freedom were the mountaineers, who, in their inaccessible haunts, inured to privation, skilled in all manly exercises, and ignorant of luxury, clung with obstinate tenacity to their idols, and defied all attempts of the Prophet to convert or subdue them. Nor did Islam enlist her adherents in the purlieus of crowded cities. In Pagan as in Moslem Arabia, trade and religion were closely associated. The sympathies of the organized community were with the ancient religion, which contributed to its wealth, its employment, its personal profit, and its social distinction. The merchants and their numerous dependents looked coldly upon a revelation which menaced their revenues and their importance. The priesthood, recruited from the noblest families of the Peninsula, fostered this prejudice with an ardor born of instinctive hatred and professional pride. These two classes, therefore, contributed little to the propagation of the new doctrines; it was the wild hordes of the Desert that conquered the world.

The Himyarite inscriptions, recently deciphered, have established the fact that, at an unknown epoch, two migratory populations, one proceeding from the North, the other from the South, came together in their course, and were so blended by association and intermarriage as to form, in a short time, a single people. This rapid fusion points to a common racial derivation, and it is not improbable that the northern division were the Canaanites expelled by the sword of Joshua.

The very conditions of their existence, in early times, necessarily precluded the idea of systematic organization or concerted union among the vagabond tribes of Arabia. Their polity, if it may be dignified by that name, was essentially patriarchal. Chiefs and rulers were selected from families renowned for individual merit, noble descent, and antiquity of origin, and, in accordance with the paternal custom of the

Orient, all retainers of the prince—who, in fact, were usually related to him—were in time enrolled as members of his household; and, in this way, fragments of certain tribes, drawn to a common centre by the ties of real or fancied kindred or through the fear of annihilation, acquired a great preponderance over their neighbors. Before the establishment of Mohammedan rule, there was no government, no code of laws, no superior authority either delegated to or assumed by the magistrate. Each family was independent; each member of it recognized no obligation to society except the protection of his clansmen. The instinct of self-preservation, the force of public opinion, and the apprehension of the encroachments of rival tribes were the only motives sufficiently powerful to effect a temporary union of those whose vital interests were threatened. The power of the sheik was nominal; his functions advisory rather than executive. His station was one of more honor than usefulness; of his own volition he could neither direct military operations, enforce obedience, reward merit, nor inflict punishment. The affairs of the tribe were administered by such of its members as were conspicuous for age, dignity, and wisdom. Even the decision of such a council was not imperative in cases where the general welfare was concerned; for, under such circumstances, the judgment of every personage of wealth, rank, or social distinction was consulted. Absolutism, so prominent a feature of Asiatic government, and carried to such an extreme by Mohammed's successors, was thus unknown in ancient Arabia. Dominated by the tumultuous freedom of individual caprice, its isolated communities were not even subject to the ordinary legal restrictions imposed by the voice of democracy; and their control approached as near to anarchical license as was compatible with the bare preservation of society. Natural obstacles, such as the scarcity of water and the barrenness of the soil, added to long-inherited prejudice, traditional enmity, and difficulty of intercommunication, have always prevented the political and intellectual development of the Arabs in their native land. The persistence of his original institutions after the mighty revolutions elsewhere wrought by Islam prove conclusively that national regeneration of the Arab under the sky of the Desert is a practical impossibility.

The life of the Bedouin was passed in unremitting hostility. War was the normal condition of his existence; it supplied the sole incentives he deemed worthy of attention—the gratification of revenge, the acquisition of glory, the appropriation of the property of his neighbor. The indulgence of these passions, and especially of the ignoble propensity to rapine, and his cruelty, were his most conspicuous and discreditable characteristics. The occupation of robbery was in the eyes of the Arab rather honorable than otherwise, as it was intimately associated with the profession of arms. In a society without the resources of agriculture, manufactures, or commerce, violent means must be relied on for the sustenance of life. In the Desert the only available expedients to this end were the plunder of enemies and the blackmail of travellers. The total absence of organized government rendered the possession of property doubly precarious. Nowhere else was the fickleness of fortune so apparent. The attack of a hostile tribe might render the most opulent individual a pauper in a single night. No vigilance could prevent such a catastrophe in a region affording unlimited opportunities for surprise and ambuscade, where there was no title to the soil, where the wealth of a community consisted largely of flocks of sheep and herds of camels. Under circumstances where a man's importance and position among his fellows were dependent upon his inclination to encounter danger and his capacity to elude detection in the pursuit of pillage, poverty became disgraceful. Constant apprehension bred distrust of strangers, until it became a predominant national trait. Where two parties of Bedouins, unknown to each other, met in the Desert, the stronger immediately attacked the weaker. A daring predatory enterprise conferred the highest popular distinction upon its hero. A great robber, who united the qualities of courage and duplicity, and who had amassed wealth by his exploits, was the idol of his tribe. The memory of the famous brigand Harami is even now cherished in the Hedjaz with an admiring veneration scarcely inferior to that conferred upon his countryman Mohammed.

The mental constitution of the ancient Arab presented many remarkable inconsistencies, most of which are still apparent in the character of his descendants. Brave even to temerity, he felt no compunction at the secret assassination of a foe. Professing reverence for age and relying for guidance upon the advice of the elders of his tribe, he did not hesitate to drive the old and infirm from the public feast. While the greatest renown attended the plunder of an encampment, the commission of a trifling theft made the perpetrator an object of universal detestation. He assisted the unfortunate and plundered the defenceless with equal alacrity. The exercise of a generous and unselfish hospitality was no bar to the pursuit of a guest after he had left the inviolable precincts of the camp. In many respects, however, the character of the Bedouin was eminently worthy of admiration. His courage was undisputed. He possessed a high sense of personal honor. The fugitive who solicited his protection, even though he were an enemy, was safe so long as he remained within the enclosure of his tent, and he espoused the cause of the unknown suppliant as if it were his own. After sunset, his blazing watch-fire, like a friendly beacon, guided the course of the belated wanderer over the desert sea. He disputed with his neighbors for the honor of entertaining the stranger, and the deepest reproach he could undergo was the imputation that he was deficient in the virtue of hospitality. His sense of chivalry, nurtured amidst the constant perils of an uncertain existence, was conspicuous in the respect and consideration he afterwards exhibited in the treatment of woman. His simplicity of manner and gravity of demeanor imparted an air of dignity to his appearance, which elicited the respect of those far superior to him in rank, education, and knowledge. Patient in adversity, he considered the display of grief as an unpardonable evidence of weakness. His love of liberty dominated his nature to an extent impossible of appreciation by those subject to the salutary restraints of civilized communities. The existence of many noble qualities in the character of the Arab, however, only rendered its defects the more glaring. His apparent imperturbability screened from the public gaze many vices and imperfections. Like all barbarians, his disposition was largely infantine and capricious, petulant, diverted by trifles, controlled by instinct rather than by reason, quick to take offence, and relentlessly vindictive. Of all beings he was pre-eminently the creature of impulse. His pride was inordinate, his rapacity insatiable. With him the prosecution of vengeance was a sacred duty, which took precedence of every moral and social obligation; and such was his enmity, that he regarded the forgiveness of a serious injury as the badge of a coward. An incorrigible braggart, he never hesitated to employ treachery when it would accomplish the purposes of valor. He practised cannibalism, and like the ferocious Scandinavians drank from the skulls of slaughtered victims. Participation in these horrid banquets was not confined to warriors; women also were present at them, and wore, with savage pride, necklaces and amulets composed of the ears, noses, and bones of the dead.

Under the pretext of preventing future dishonor, but really with a view to economy, under conditions of existence involving a perpetual struggle, he often buried his female children alive. It is said that Othman was never known to weep except when, at the burial of his little daughter, she reached up and caressingly wiped the dust of her grave from his beard. From such unspeakable atrocities as this did Mohammed deliver his countrymen.

The Arabs practised both polyandry and polygamy to an extent rarely countenanced by other barbarians. One woman, whose career would seem to be unique in the history of matrimonial achievement, was celebrated for having been the wife of forty husbands. In a society where communal marriage prevailed, the passion of jealousy was necessarily unknown. The Pagan Arab indulged to the utmost the vice of drunkenness, and prided himself upon his capacity to absorb great quantities of liquor—there were some Himyarite princes who obtained an unenviable immortality by drinking themselves to death. Gambling was so popular in the Desert that the Bedouin, like the ancient German, often staked his liberty, his most priceless possession, on the toss of a pebble. Like the Hebrew patriarchs, he contracted incestuous marriages. He gloried in the name of brigand, and regarded the capture of a caravan as the principal object of life. It was not unusual for him, after plundering the dead, to mutilate them with a brutal malignity that would disgrace an American Indian. He tested guilt or innocence by ordeals of fire and water, which he and his kinsman the Jew had inherited from a remote antiquity. The practice of licentious gallantry, universally prevalent in the Peninsula, and celebrated in many an amatory stanza of the Bedouin poet, was temporarily checked by the austere rule of Islam; but, reviving ere long, under the congenial skies of Spain and Sicily, spread northward, and, inseparably associated with deeds of chivalry and romantic adventure, infected, in time, the rude and comparatively virtuous barbarians of Europe.

An unusual degree of intelligence, a lively imagination, a vivid curiosity, a retentive memory, a childish love of the marvellous, distinguished the Arab of the Age of Ignorance from the other pastoral nations of Africa and Asia. Feuds between tribe and tribe, nourished by injuries mutually borne and inflicted for a hundred generations, intensified the ferocity of a nature which became, under such provocations, incapable of pity. Everything connected with the daily life of the warrior had a direct tendency to foster an already too violent inclination to deeds of blood. The war-horse had his biography; the sword of every famous chieftain had a name and a history. The sayings of the successful marauder, often uttered with epigrammatic terseness, passed into proverbs, and were quoted, with extravagant admiration, by his most remote descendants; his exploits, immortalized by the stirring verses of the poet, were recounted nightly by the camp-fires of his tribe. In case of the murder of a kinsman, no mourning was tolerated until ample vengeance had been taken for the crime. The execution of the savage law of blood-feud, while it contributed to stifle every sentiment of humanity where an hereditary foe was the offender, does not appear to have had any marked effect in increasing the fierceness of the character of the Arab in his contests with those against whom he had no special cause of enmity. Where tribal hostility was, however, a point of honor as well as a religious duty, the vendetta was prosecuted with implacable severity. No circumstance of gratitude or chivalric attachment, neither the memory of past favors nor the hope of future distinction, was permitted to interfere with its rigid enforcement. The right of revenge, originally descending to the fifth generation, passed by inheritance, and was, in fact, never lost, and seldom relinquished. A regular schedule of fines was recognized, dependent upon the age, rank, and social position of the person murdered; but no family that entertained a becoming idea of its own importance and of the dignity of its tribe would condescend to accept the stated number of camels which ancient prescription and common consent had established as the equivalent of a homicide. This barbarous custom applied to every soldier slain in honorable warfare, as fully as to the victim of the assassin's dagger; and the wholesome dread of the consequences of a hard-fought conflict, where a score of lives might be exacted in return for every fallen enemy, usually rendered the encounters of the Arab comparatively bloodless. An extraordinary value therefore attached to human life in the Desert, where the killing of an individual might entail the extermination of a clan. Considering the bitter hostility evinced by many tribes towards one another, the consequences of animosity inherited for ages, and the continual opportunities for mutual destruction, with their insignificant results, we may, without hesitation, conclude that the law of blood-revenge, despite the idea of ferocity it conveys, has, in reality, been powerfully instrumental in the preservation of the Arab race.

The habits of the Arab were necessarily abstemious. The requirement of constant exertion to obtain the necessaries of life, the uncertain tenure of property, the menacing presence of danger, the poverty of the soil, the national prejudice against industrial occupations, were not conducive to indulgence in those vices which flourish most vigorously under the artificial conditions of an established civilization. The scanty harvests of the South were insufficient to maintain even the population of those thinly settled provinces. Among the products of the vegetable kingdom, the date was the principal reliance of the nomadic people of Arabia. Of this most valuable fruit a hundred varieties grew in the neighborhood of Medina alone. Its highly nutritious properties, its easy preservation, the convenience with which it could be transported for great distances, rendered it an article of food especially adapted to the denizen of those arid and unproductive regions in which it flourished, and which, without it, would have been depopulated. Even its seeds were an object of traffic, and were fed to horses and camels. With the Arabs, as with other nomadic races, a vegetable diet was resorted to only in case of necessity. The quantity of meat served at a repast was an index to the host's importance as well as the measure of his hospitality. A brass caldron was considered as of only ordinary size when it would easily hold a sheep, and some were so large that a horseman could, without difficulty, eat from them without dismounting. The morsels served from these seething receptacles were proportioned to the vessels in which they were cooked and to the voracious appetites of those who consumed them. The belief, prevalent among barbarians, that the characteristics of an animal are transmitted with undiminished vigor to all who feed upon its flesh, was shared by the Arabs. As their favorite meat was that of the camel, they attributed to its use their irascible temper, a trait which is prominently developed in that beast, also noted among quadrupeds for its dogged obstinacy. In a land where barrenness so discouraged the labors of the husbandman and the shepherd, no object affording nutrition could be neglected, and even the insect world was called upon to contribute its share to the urgent necessities of humanity. Locusts, dried and salted, have always formed a staple article of diet among the poorer classes of Arabia, and, an important part of the larder of every camp, are sold in vast quantities in the markets of the Peninsula.

The differences and the prejudices of caste, the most serious impediments to progress, were unknown to the proud rovers of the Desert, where individual merit was the highest title to respect. The authority of the chief was founded on the consideration he had obtained among the members of his tribe rather than on the illustrious circumstances of his birth or the antiquity of his lineage. Age was an essential requisite to the attainment of official dignity, as indicative of the wisdom supposed to be the result of long experience. With the Bedouin, there was none of that greed of power whose indulgence so often disturbs the peace, and inflames the passions of societies in an advanced state of civilization. The sheik governed through the respect entertained for his character, through the influence of his manners, above all, through his relationship with his clansmen. The paternal sentiment was paramount among the Arabian people. They cherished the memory of their forefathers with peculiar respect. The right of sanctuary attached to their sepulchre; the tribal organization and domestic traditions of the Bedouin were derived from this feeling of ancestral veneration. Like other Asiatics, they considered a numerous family the greatest of distinctions; the father of ten sons was ennobled by a title of honor; and no nation attached more importance to the possession of phenomenal virility. In their treatment of women, a striking contrast exists, in numerous instances, between the Pagan and the later Arabians. With both, it is true, woman was generally a slave. Yet sometimes, in the Age of Ignorance, she was raised to official dignities, even to the throne itself; her opinion was solicited in momentous affairs of state; and in the rôle of diviner and sorceress she wielded a power, unlimited for good or evil, over her superstitious followers. Often gifted with rare poetic talent, she competed, not without distinction, for the coveted palm of literary excellence. Tradition has also handed down the names and achievements of certain intrepid amazons, who fought by the side of their husbands and brothers; and whose determined courage contributed, in a marked degree, to change the fortunes of more than one doubtful battle. But, as a rule, both before and after Mohammed, the advancement of the sex from a condition of servitude was resolutely discountenanced by the Arabs. In the Age of Ignorance, it was stigmatized by the ungallant epithet of "Nets of the Demon." The sacred ties of blood, and the fact that with marriage woman did not renounce her hereditary privileges, could always command the assistance of her kinsmen, seek refuge among them, and be avenged by their valor in case of grievous personal injury, gave her a considerable degree of importance in the social system of Arabia. It is very evident that in early times polyandry prevailed everywhere in that country, an indication of a scarcity of females, and a custom always incident to a certain stage in the formation and development of society. Its prior existence is demonstrated by the vestiges of communal marriage to be traced to-day in remote portions of the Peninsula, and in the well authenticated tradition that female kinship was originally the rule in the Desert, the child belonging to the tribe and following the fortunes of the mother. Among the Bedouins, the only recognized methods of obtaining a wife were those of capture and purchase. The former was thoroughly congenial with the warlike instincts of a race whose possessions acquired an especial value as the result of martial prowess; the latter represented an indemnity for the possible loss of sons who, under other circumstances, would have become warriors of the maternal tribe. There was, however, no real difference between the lot of the bride who, as the prize of victory, was dragged shrieking from the folds of her tent, and that of the smiling victim whose beauty had been bartered for a hundred camels. Both were regarded as chattels, and descended with other personal property to the heir. As the population increased, and the means of livelihood became more difficult to procure, the appearance of a female child was looked upon as a calamity; infanticide grew common; and nothing but the hope of being able, at some future day, to add to his herd the camels of some prospective suitor, ever reconciled the mercenary Bedouin to the birth of a daughter.

The attainment to a high degree of civilization with all its demoralizing influence was not able to destroy the native politeness, the air of conscious dignity, the noble hospitality, and the courtly graces of manner which distinguished the fierce and untaught tribesman of the Desert. His sense of independence was not hampered by invidious distinctions of rank or inconvenient regulations of property. His intuitive knowledge of human nature, his rare susceptibility to every impression which can improve and develop the mind, his capacity to deal with the most difficult questions of policy, his willingness to encounter the most appalling dangers, were qualities which insured his success in the most distant countries and under the most adverse and discouraging conditions. Despite his readiness to profit by the superior knowledge of his adversaries, he entertained the most extravagant ideas of his own importance, and looked down upon all who were of different manners, religious faith, or nationality. His inordinate family pride preserved for the astonishment of subsequent generations the endless nomenclature of his progenitors; and, at the birth of Mohammed, the most obscure and poverty-stricken individual could name, with a fluency born of long practice and traditional inheritance, his ancestors for six hundred years. His language, wonderfully complex but flexible, offering to the purposes of the poet and the orator—by reason of its prodigal richness and inexhaustible variety—every resource of sentiment, pathos, and eloquence, yet so easily acquired that it was spoken by young children with grammatical correctness and fluency, he justly boasted as one of the most perfect idioms ever invented by man. In short, the Arab regarded himself as the highest exemplar of humanity; his arrogance revolted at the idea of matrimonial connections with races which he deemed inferior to his own; and the pre-eminence he claimed for himself and his countrymen was indicated by the prerogatives which he asserted Allah had vouchsafed to them alone of all nations; " that their turbans should be their diadems, their tents their houses, their swords their intrenchments, and their poems their laws."

The pre-Islamitic religion of the Arabs was mainly a debasing idolatry polluted by human sacrifices, and ascending, by ill-defined gradations, from the lowest forms of fetichism to the adoration of the stars. Their faith was far from uniform, and almost every tribe had special objects of veneration and peculiar modes of worship. Some were absolutely destitute of the idea of a God; some grovelled before roughly-hewn blocks of stone; others worshipped trees and springs,—the most grateful gifts of nature in a parched and thirsty land; others, again, greeted with praise the rising sun as its beams illuminated the purple mists of the Desert, or bowed reverently at night before the glittering majesty of the heavens. The members of certain tribes were materialists; not a few accepted the metempsychosis; many were familiar with the philosophical creed of the Buddhist, which regarded death as the irrevocable end of all spiritual activity, the beginning of a state of absolute quiescence, of eternal and immutable rest. The majority of the Arab races, however, looked upon their idols as mediators between the Supreme Being and man. Hence they erected temples in their honor, named their children for them, made pilgrimages to their shrines, and solicited their good offices with precious gifts and offerings. The heavenly bodies were placed in the same category. Their intercession with the Deity was also invoked by frequent applications; and to their power, thus indirectly exercised, were attributed the most important as well as the most trivial occurrences of life, the benefits of fortune, the infliction of calamities, the mysterious and terrifying effects of natural phenomena. It is a superstition as old as the human race to imagine the universe to be peopled with mysterious beings, and the lives of men to be moulded by the beneficent or malignant influence of the stars. The worship of the Sun, the genial dispenser of light, of warmth, of health, in whose train follow the increase of flocks, the bursting of buds, the welcome sight of refreshing verdure, the author of all that is useful and attractive in every species of organic life, a worship which in ages of primeval simplicity has always most strongly appealed to the gratitude and veneration of man, was highly popular in Pagan Arabia. Classic historians have established the fact that it was at one time almost universal in the Peninsula, where the idol which was the terrestrial manifestation of that great luminary was designated by the appellation Nur-Allah, "The Light of God." His authority was everywhere paramount, whether openly worshipped, represented by fire the great purifying agent, or exhibited under various symbols of force and power, which all nations, however separated, and differing in physical and mental characteristics, have, with wonderful unanimity, adopted as his peculiar emblems. Temples were also raised to the Moon, Sirius, Canopus, the Hyades, Mercury, and Jupiter. But of all the starry bodies none enjoyed greater favor, or was worshipped with more splendor, than Saturn. His attributes were often confounded by his votaries with those of his kindred divinities Mars and the Sun. It has been proved by the learned researches of Dozy, that the famous Kaaba was originally a shrine dedicated to that deity. He was the Baal of the Hebrews, and once their tutelary god as well as that of the Phœnicians—carried by the former during their sojourn in the wilderness, venerated by the latter in the magnificent temples of Sidon and Tyre. The extent of his worship in the East was, it might be said, coincident with the view of the brilliant planet by which he was represented in the tropical heavens. The giver of all material blessings, he was, in this capacity, invoked as the creator and preserver of terrestrial life; but he was also propitiated as the avenger of sacrilege and crime. Among different peoples he was adored under innumerable manifestations. The familiar word Israel is a synonym of Saturn; the Hebrew priests knew him as Sabbathai—whence is derived our Sabbath; and in Judea, as in Egypt, the first day of the week was dedicated to and named for him. In Arabia, this popular divinity was known as Hobal, a word indisputably derived from the Hebrew language. Occupying the most exalted position in the Arabic Pantheon, while his image was anthropomorphic, he was, in reality, a representative of the monotheistic principle. His name and his worship in the Peninsula were alike of Jewish origin. Antiquarian ingenuity and research have traced his various migrations from the eastern shore of the Mediterranean to the province of Hedjaz, and have elucidated certain obscure Scriptural texts relative to his shrine, his worship, and his festivals. Among the multitudinous divinities which claimed the reverence of the ancient Arabians was also the Hebrew Jehovah, adored under the form of a he-goat, sculptured in gold, as well as the profligate Venus, known to the Babylonians as Mylitta, and to the Phœnicians as Astarte. As a tribute to their eminence in the Christian world, the Virgin and the Child occupied a post of honor among the three hundred and sixty idols which crowded the sanctuary of Mecca. In the religious system of the Peninsula there was no mythology, a fact which perhaps contributed not a little to its speedy overthrow. But, though polytheistic to the last degree, the Arabs recognized a Supreme Being whose majesty was confined to no particular locality, to whom no altar was dedicated, and who, too awful to be directly addressed, could be approached only through his celestial ministers the stars. This was the great Al-Lah, whose name, corresponding to the El and the Elohim of the Jews, was pre-eminent in honor and dignity, both in the Age of Ignorance and in the Age of Islam. The most superstitious races of men, and those that are the highest in intelligence among the most civilized, have and require no shrines.

In Arabia the whole Desert was the temple of the Supreme God.

Associated with the most exalted ideas of divine power were to be found superstitions usually encountered only in the primitive epochs of society. The wide-spread worship of the generative forces of nature, whose remaining monuments seem to the uninstructed sense of our cavilling age mere evidences of a depraved imagination, had its share of public favor in Arabia, where the male and female principles were adored under various symbolical forms. Many of these have survived in the monoliths scattered throughout the Peninsula, whose towering masses are regarded, even by devout Moslems, with no small degree of superstitious awe. The stone-circles and menhirs mentioned by travellers as existing in Oman and Nedjd are evidently of the same general type as those of Carnac and Stonehenge, and, from the descriptions given of them, of scarcely inferior dimensions, and perhaps of still higher antiquity. It is a singular circumstance, that gigantic structures, bearing such a common resemblance as to suggest that they were erected by the same race of builders and designed for similar purposes, should be found in countries so different in physical features, climate, inhabitants, religious traditions, language, and history, as Central Arabia and Western Europe.

Like other nations of ancient times, the Arabs invested certain trees with a sacred character, a custom indicative of the lingering influence of phallicism; a worship whose original principles, long forgotten in the Peninsula, survived only in the exhibition of its peculiar emblems and in the practice of a gross and shameless immorality. Among the Pagan Arabs, no form of superstition was too debasing to claim its votaries. They raised altars to fire. They attributed supernatural powers to the crocodile and the serpent.

Each tent had its image; every hovel of sun-dried bricks was filled with tutelary deities. Shapeless masses of stone, which tradition had associated with remarkable events or endowed with celestial origin, were approached with a reverence not vouchsafed to idols of the most costly materials and elaborate workmanship. Of these blocks, which partook of the nature of the fetich, the black were sacred to the Sun, the white to the Moon. In the Pagan world two of the former were especially famous; over one was erected a splendid temple on the mountain near Emesa in Syria, whence the infamous Roman emperor Heliogabalus derived his name; the other was built into the wall of the Kaaba of Mecca. The latter was the most remarkable object of the kind known to antiquity. A plain fragment of basalt, seven inches in diameter, whose composition is apparently identical with that of a neighboring mountain, it had acquired, in the eyes of the people of Arabia, a sanctity not shared by any other emblem of idolatrous worship. It was probably, in its origin, a phallic symbol, and stood alone in an open square of the city, ages preceding the building of the Kaaba, an event which tradition has assigned to a date four hundred years before the foundation of the temple of Solomon. Thus invested with the sanction of immemorial prescription and the virtues of a miraculous relic, it has received the reverent homage of millions upon millions of idolaters and Moslems. It has survived the accidents of conquest, of iconoclasm, of conflagration. The silver bands which unite its fragments bear witness to the vicissitudes and rough usage to which it has been subjected. The healing power it was supposed to possess attracted the sick and the disabled from regions far beyond the limits of Arabia. It was the starting-point of ceremonial and pilgrimage. It imparted its virtues to the Kaaba, that temple where alone, in all the Peninsula, hereditary feuds were suspended; where violence was forgotten; where rudeness gave way to courtesy; where the temporary surrender of individual freedom, and the voluntary relinquishment of tribal animosity, seemed to announce the existence of national sentiment and the possibility of national union. The recognition by Mohammed of the claims of the Black Stone and the Kaaba—the ancient temple of Saturn—to public veneration, in a creed otherwise uncompromisingly hostile to idolatry, demonstrated the high estimation in which they were held by the Arabs. The latter, with their numerous shrines, their swarms of deities, their elaborate paraphernalia of worship and imposture, were, however, far from being a religious people. They evinced a decided aversion to metaphysics. Their ideas of personal liberty were not consistent with unquestioning submission to the tyranny of a priesthood. Their native intelligence rendered them skeptical; their nomadic habits were unfavorable to the maintenance of a permanent ecclesiastical establishment. The multiplicity of deities had, as is invariably the case, weakened the faith of the masses in any. The genuine piety of a people is always in an inverse ratio to the number of its gods.

The early Arabians practised magic and divination, had recourse to oracles, maintained wizards and sorcerers—charlatans whose ascendency was largely due to the narcotics they made use of to open a pretended communication with the spirit world. Amulets were universally worn as a protection against the baneful consequences of the evil eye. Hand in hand with presages and magical arts, auguries, and incantations, came the incipient doctrine of the influence of the planets upon mineral substances, as well as a belief in their power to affect the destiny and welfare of man; theories which, eventually developing into the vain pursuits of alchemy and judicial astrology, indicate an acquaintance with the principles of science only acquired by much study and repeated experiments. The practice of these rites, so severely reprobated in the Koran, was associated in the minds of the people with the ceremonies of public worship during the age of polytheism. The words altar and talisman are practically synonymous in Arabic, a fact which discloses the intimate alliance originally existing between divination, sorcery, and religion in the Peninsula.

Human sacrifices, so repugnant to all our ideas of piety and justice, but common to nations of Semitic origin, were of frequent occurrence among the Arabs before Mohammed. The mode of death was by fire, which removed every earthly impurity; but it was only in the fulfilment of a solemn vow, on an occasion of national rejoicing, or to avert some impending calamity, that such a costly expiation was exacted. The Israelites, allied to the Arabs by the ties of consanguinity, and by similar religious conceptions, had also long been familiar with these revolting and cruel rites; instances of whose observance will at once suggest themselves to all who are familiar with the Pentateuch.

The Hebrew has always exerted a remarkable influence upon the public sentiment, the religious faith, and the foreign and domestic relations of the inhabitants of Arabia. A great analogy exists between the languages of the two nations, and the Hebrew alphabet was used by the prehistoric Arabs. It is believed by many Oriental scholars that Israel was not the founder of the people who bear his name; that the twelve tribes have a mystic relation to certain of the heavenly bodies or to the months of the year; and it is known that the word Keturah means simply "frankincense." No doubt now exists that the Jew and the Arab are of common ancestry. For a period of twenty-five hundred years before the Hegira the former had been established in Yemen. The trade of that kingdom, with all its vast ramifications, was in his hands. His power enabled him constantly to dictate the policy of its sovereigns.

His worship, equally idolatrous with that of the Bedouin—for he was the descendant of the Simeonites, against whom, among others, the anathemas of the Bible were directed—surpassed the latter in the splendor of its appointments and the insolence of its priests. In a land where toleration was otherwise universal, he was enabled to persecute, with implacable enmity, Christian exiles, whom even the rapacity of the desert freebooter had spared. The rich settlements of northwestern Arabia were, to all intents and purposes, Jewish colonies. In the barren and inhospitable region of the Hedjaz, the Jew founded the towns of Medina and Mecca. In such a congenial atmosphere, the superstitions of Asia Minor obtained a ready acceptance. He established the worship of Baal, the most renowned of the Phœnician divinities. He introduced the rite of circumcision, hitherto unknown in Arabia. He communicated his idolatrous observances to the population of the country which had offered him a refuge. He gave a name to its principal city, for the word Mecca is Hebrew, signifying "Great Field of Battle;" the Pagan ceremonial of the Hedjaz can be traced to Palestine, and the Kaaba was originally known as Beth-El, "The House of God." Quick to recognize the advantages to be derived by commerce from religious pilgrimage, he made that city the centre of national devotion as well as the chief distributing point of the vast trade of Europe, Asia Minor, Ethiopia, and India. The excellent commercial situation of Mecca, near the Red Sea and on the great caravan highway connecting Syria and

Yemen, could scarcely compensate, however, for the serious physical disadvantages which unfriendly nature had imposed upon it. Its houses were crowded into a narrow valley two miles long by only nine hundred feet wide. The rays of a vertical sun beat pitilessly down upon a landscape destitute of verdure. Water, the most priceless of blessings in the Desert, was scarce and unpalatable. A salt effervescence covered the neighboring plains. The seasons were irregular; storms were violent; the coast of the Hedjaz possessed the unenviable reputation of being one of the most pestilential in the world. The city was dependent upon trade for the necessaries of life, and the unexpected delay of the caravan often menaced the population with famine. Yet, with all these drawbacks, the commerce of Mecca flourished almost beyond precedent. Caravans of more than two thousand camels were no uncommon sight in its narrow streets. Each of these beasts of burden carried a load of four hundred pounds of rare and costly commodities,—silks, spices, ivory, gold-dust, and perfumes. The annual exports of the town in the closing days of Pagan ascendency reached the enormous sum of fifteen million dollars, half of which was profit. Not the least of the sources of gain to the people of Mecca were the valuable offerings left by pilgrims and merchants in their temples. For a distance of leagues the ground was holy, and all who trod upon it could claim the right of sanctuary. The blood of neither man nor beast could be shed within these sacred precincts without incurring the imputation of sacrilege and the punishment of death. There was no traveller, from whatever country he came, who could not find, among the innumerable idols of the Kaaba, a familiar divinity upon whom to bestow the tribute of his devotion or gratitude. Of the immense profits resulting from the politic combination of traffic and superstition, the Hebrew exacted the lion's share. His rulers met each day at the Kaaba to exchange views on finance and theology. The heathen legends of Palestine were incorporated into the new system, with the astral worship of the Sabeans and the polytheism of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Desert, itself derived from a thousand different and uncertain sources. The monotheism of Israel was not recognized by the tribe of Simeon, which had been driven into exile long before the Pentateuch was written. Ideas thus blended in the popular mind for centuries might, under favorable conditions, be modified, but never obliterated. There is no question that Islam is largely Hebrew in origin, although a considerable number of its ceremonies can be deduced from the customs of Pagan Arabia. In their migrations, which closed with the settlement of the Hedjaz, the Jews, while wandering far, had at last returned to the cradle of their race.

The arbitrary rules of ceremonial cleanliness; the exclusion of blood from the precincts of the temple; the classification of certain animals as " holy," which an error of the translator has transformed into " unclean;" the penalties for many offences; the adoration of Phœnician divinities; the nomenclature disclosed by family genealogies; the correspondence in meaning of many terms used in their languages—peculiarities common to both the Arab and the Jew—go farther to prove an intimate relationship between the two races than the uncertainties of tradition or the association of neighborhood would tend to establish. The antipathy to the Hebrew, subsequently so bitter among Mohammedans, did not exist in ancient Arabia. The Jew served with distinction in the armies of Khaled and Amru. Mutual aversion, however great in subsequent times, was never sufficient to induce the Israelite to destroy those whom he regarded as his kinsmen. As his myths had formed the basis of a new religion, his enterprise and assistance contributed, in no insignificant degree, to the foundation of a new and magnificent empire. He guided the councils of the most renowned Mohammedan princes. Without the dogmas he furnished, the history of Islam would never have been written. Without the suggestions he voluntarily offered, and the treasure he poured into the Moslem camps, the conquest of Spain could never have been achieved. The fairest of Mussulman writers have rarely failed to acknowledge the obligations of their countrymen to an unfortunate race which the prejudices of nearly twenty centuries have subjected to universal proscription.

Christianity made no progress in Arabia until after its political alliance with Constantine had imparted such a tremendous impulse to the dissemination of its doctrines. The latter do not seem to be adapted to the Asiatic mind, and have never been able either to appeal to the reason or to arouse the enthusiasm of nations of Semitic blood. It offered little that was congenial with, and much that was abhorrent to, the lax and tolerant code of the independent and polytheistic rovers of the Desert. At the birth of Mohammed it had already, for four centuries, been established in the Peninsula, and still, in the very shadow of its temples, the mocking Arab bowed before his thousand gods. The principles of the Ebionite sect, which prevailed in the Arabian churches, so far from attracting the curiosity or awakening the reverence of the sarcastic Bedouin, only served to excite his ridicule. The sublime truths of the religion of the Bible, the eloquence of its teachers, the piety of its saints, the pomp of its ritual, the promises and threats of its revelation, were lost upon the reckless freebooters, devoted to sensual pleasures, to escapades of gallantry, to the generous rivalry of poesy, to daring feats of arms. The only mark of attention its adherents received was their classification with the despised Hebrew as Ahl-al-Kitab, "The People of the Book." In its adaptability to the requirements and the mental capacity of the multitude, it was ill-fitted to cope with the religion that eventually supplanted it. On one side were the incomprehensible dogmas of a debased Christianity, indispensable to its acceptance; on the other, the simplicity of the profession of Islam, which even a child could understand. For these reasons it made comparatively few proselytes in the Peninsula, and at no time was acknowledged over any considerable area, except during the short period which intervened between the Abyssinian conquest of Yemen and the rise of Mohammedanism.

Many of the rites and customs adopted by the great Lawgiver, or preserved by his followers and generally regarded as peculiar to Islam, antedated the Koran by centuries. The Mohammedan attitudes of worship are the same as those depicted upon the eternal monuments of the Pharaohs. The heathen pilgrims, clad in the Ihram, or sacred garment, seven times made the circuit of the Kaaba; embraced the Black Stone; ran the courses between the holy stations of Al-Safa and Al-Marwa; cast stones in the valley of Mina; performed the ancient duties of sacrifice and local pilgrimage, and were systematically plundered by the greedy and scoffing Meccans, just as all good Moslem pilgrims are to-day. The primitive Arabs inculcated the duty of personal cleanliness by frequent ablution. They shaved their heads, and used the depilatory for the removal of superfluous hair from the body. Like the Egyptians, they stained their hands and feet with henna, and blackened their eyelids with antimony. They removed their sandals, as Moses did, when they stood on holy ground. They scrupulously abstained from certain kinds of food, and their actions were often governed by regulations practically identical, in their general character, with those prescribed by the canons of Jewish and Moslem law.

The spirit of Arabian genius, destined in subsequent ages to effect such a revolution in the literary and scientific history of the world, had in the sixth century of the Christian era disclosed no indications of its gigantic powers. No condition of existence could be less suggestive of a capacity for intellectual achievement than that whose main dependence was violence and plunder. The Arab of that epoch had no written records save a few obscure inscriptions in the Himyarite dialect, which have been deciphered by the plodding industry of modern scholars, and are, for the most part, epitaphs. Traditions, modified or corrupted by the vanity or the prejudice of each successive generation, were the sole and uncertain reliance of the chronicler. The power of memory by which these were retained and transmitted from an unknown antiquity seems absolutely miraculous and incredible.

Although destitute of authentic history, and even unskilled in the common arts by which a nation's glory may be perpetuated, the early Arab excelled in a species of literary composition in which barbarian races have always exhibited the greatest proficiency. A talent for poetry, which invariably attains its highest development among those least exposed to the practical ideas and refined vices of civilization, was considered by the Bedouin as the most noble of human accomplishments. His temperament, his situation, his pursuits, rendered him peculiarly susceptible to the charms of the Muse. His spirit was impetuous, his invention inexhaustible, his imagination riotous, his enthusiasm unbounded. From an abnormally sensitive nervous organization which nature had bestowed upon him, on occasions of prolonged mental excitement often proceeded an hysterical frenzy, a state declared by the most renowned of poets to be indispensable for perfection in his art. The scenery of the Desert; its impressive solitudes; the enchanting illusions of the mirage; the magnificent constellations of the tropical heavens; the life of incessant peril; the exploits of romantic gallantry; the nocturnal excursion,—the surprise, the battle, the retreat, the rescue,—these all stimulated the imaginative faculty of the Arab, and urged him to the cultivation of a talent which might transmit to posterity events whose immortality was at once his personal title to honor, the pastime of his camp-fire, and the glory of his tribe. In the means at his disposal the poet enjoyed a rare, almost a unique advantage. The energy and softness of the Arabian language, its melodious character, the abundance and variety of its metaphors, render it peculiarly available as the vehicle of poetic sentiment. There is perhaps no idiom which lends itself with such facility to the construction of rhyme; for its very prose is frequently musical. The researches of modern philology have brought to the notice of Europe the complexity and perfection of its grammatical construction, the richness of its vocabulary, its boundless scope and graceful imagery. Most appropriately did the old philosopher, Mohammed-al-Damiri, referring to the native eloquence and exuberant diction of his countrymen, exclaim: " Wisdom hath lighted on three things,—the brain of the Franks, the hands of the Chinese, and the tongues of the Arabs."

The poetry of the Arabs is even more obscure in its origin than the primitive history of their race. Without the assistance of writing, no literature, however popular, can maintain its integrity for even a single generation. Even the phenomenal memory of that people—a gift so universal as not to elicit comment among them, and which was strengthened by the daily rehearsal of favorite compositions—could only imperfectly supply the place of permanent and authentic records. The matter of the Arabian poems was therefore constantly changing, while the subjects and versification remained the same. Their form was generally that of the dramatic pastoral; sometimes the elegiac ode, which offered an opportunity for the enumeration of the virtues of the deceased and, incidentally, of the achievements of his tribe, was adopted. The genius of the pre-Islamitic poet never attempted the epic, which so often profits by the inexhaustible resources of the fabulous; and, although surrounded by an atmosphere eminently favorable to the inspiration of such productions, it does not seem to have had an adequate conception of them. Its representations exhibited to the enraptured listener the stirring events of his adventurous life, which his pride taught him to regard as vastly superior, in all that promotes the dignity of humanity, to the corrupt and inert existence of civilization. The universal possession of the poetic faculty was one of the peculiarities of the Arab nation. Old and young alike seemed gifted with it. The rules of prosody, and even the simplest canons of metrical composition, were unknown. Yet such was the instinctive perception of rhythmical correctness, that the versification of the most humble was characterized by propriety and elegance, qualities which tended to enhance the fierce enthusiasm, the sublimity of thought, the touching pathos, the burning passion, which pervade the noble poems of the Desert. Many of the latter bear a striking resemblance to the Song of Solomon; some are remarkable for their rhapsodies; others for their weighty and sententious wisdom; others again for their sparkling wit and pointed epigrams. The seven poems called Moallakat, “ The Suspended,”—a word of doubtful significance so far as its relation to these productions is concerned—have always been considered the masterpieces of the ancient Arabs, and form the principal source from which our ideas of their attainments in the art of poetry must be derived. Popular credulity ascribed the name of these compositions to their presumed suspension in the Kaaba as evidence of the triumphs of their authors over all competitors; the more rational conjecture, however, connects the title of Moallakat with a necklace or pendant, of which each poem formed a jewel, a figurative mode of designating literary works among Orientals, and one especially affected by poets and historians. The entire body of tradition, combined with facts accumulated by subsequent writers of every race and creed, does not afford such a thorough insight into the public and domestic life, the prevailing sentiments and prejudices, the habits and customs of the inhabitants of the Peninsula, as do the Moallakat. They enable us partially to reconstruct the political and religious systems of the early Arabians, and to establish, by comparison, their identity with the conditions of modern existence, in localities where the sword of Islam has never been able to exterminate the detested practice of idolatry. They place before us, in all its impressiveness, the silent majesty of the Desert, its dazzling sky, its waves of quivering vapor, its interminable waste of sand; they pass in review the indolent life of the camp, varied only by a nocturnal alarm or by some daring intrigue; they relate the exciting scenes of the foray; they delineate with erotic freedom the charms of the lovely Bedouin maid; they describe the fate of the female prisoner whose captivity was often the result of artifice or barter; they rehearse the midnight march under the starry firmament, which in the florid language of the East "appeared like the folds of a silken sash variously decked with gems." Nor is the excellence of the Moallakat confined to mere description. The proud boast of exploits not unworthy of the Age of Chivalry, which, in fact, received its inspiration from this source; the sacred duties of a lavish hospitality; the rare qualities of a favorite horse or camel; the absorbing passion of love, its perils and its pleasures; the Herculean feats of virile manhood,—these were the chosen themes of the Arab poet. His verses abound in moral precepts and philosophical apothegms, conveying lessons of worldly wisdom which recall, in both their phraseology and their profound acquaintance with human nature, the Suras of the Koran and the Proverbs of Solomon. In addition to maxims of a moral tone, scattered through these productions, they exhibit, on the other hand, much that is repulsive, cruel, and barbarous. Epicureanism is, however, the prominent characteristic of the Moallakat, as, indeed, it is of all primitive Arabic poems which have descended to us. The charms of wine and women, and an indulgence in the pleasures of the banquet to the extreme limit of bacchanalian revelry, are everywhere celebrated with a license worthy of the grossest couplets of Catullus and Martial. In the relation of scenes of intrigue and midnight assignation, often laid in the camp of a hostile tribe, where discovery would have led to instant death, the adventurous spirit of the lover is deemed worthy to rank with that which sustains the hero in the front of battle. The most fulsome adulation characterizes the homage tendered by the ardent lover to the object of his idolatry. Modern fastidiousness would not tolerate the descriptions given by the poet of the physical perfections of his lady-love in all their circumstantial details; though translations exist, they are mere paraphrases; and the voluptuous images of the poet's fancy still remain discreetly hidden in the obscurity of the original idiom.

There is much similarity and repetition in Arab poetry, which the interpolations and substitutions inevitable among a people dependent for the preservation of their literature upon oral tradition will hardly account for.

The existence of the Bedouin was bounded by a narrow horizon, the Desert was his world. Its familiar objects and localities, which never changed; the deeds which they recalled; the hopes which they inspired; the memory of ancestral renown with which they were associated, suggested the topics of his song. The haughtiness which was one of his most offensive characteristics, and forbade his permanent alliance or his intermarriage with other races, strengthened the feelings of reserve which had been a national peculiarity for countless generations. His ideas, his aspirations, his joys, his sorrows, evoked by the monotonous circumstances of his environment, were little subject to deviation during the course of centuries. While his religion was a compound of all degrees of fetichism, idolatry, and astral worship, his poetry was original, pure, artless, and natural. His aptitude for versification was disclosed by the most trivial occurrences of life. A rhyming stanza, which set forth an appropriate sentiment, was often the reply to an ordinary question. Where allusion was made to an historical incident, the speaker was often challenged to confirm his statement by the recitation of an original verse, or by an apt poetical quotation, as the most reliable authority. The quick perception of the Arab was shown by his ability to finish instantly a couplet corresponding in sense and measure with a line repeated by a competitor. Its general similarity to all others renders the assignment of any Arabic poem to a certain epoch impossible, for the natural taste has never varied, and a composition that was popular three hundred years before the Hegira would be equally acceptable to-day to the mountain tribes of Central Arabia.

In the opening lines of most Arabic poems, and in those of the Moallakat especially, there is a dearth of individuality, and a common resemblance which would almost suggest that they had been written by the same person. The purity of style which characterizes the latter was, however, universally admitted; they were the recognized standards of grammatical correctness; they were consulted whenever a dispute arose concerning the meaning of a word or the construction of a sentence in later authors was in doubt; and among Mohammedans the authority of those Pagan compositions was never entirely superseded even by that of the Koran, whose sublimity of thought and elegance of diction were reverently ascribed to the direct inspiration of God.

We owe the survival of the Moallakat to the capricious taste of some self-appointed critic, who selected them from a number of poems with which he was familiar; and, through his arbitrary choice, we are deprived of the opportunity of forming an opinion of the others which his rejection has tacitly pronounced inferior. We know nothing of his qualifications for such a task, and are even ignorant of his name; but, from the remaining fragments of these productions, we may safely conclude that some of them, at least, were as fully entitled to preservation as the seven more fortunate ones which have descended to posterity.

It is a remarkable fact that no Arabic poem shows traces of Hebrew influence or contains ideas borrowed from either the Scriptures or the Talmud. The wealth and political power of the Jews; their intimate association with the nomadic tribes of the Peninsula; a close similarity of traditions, customs, and language, produced no perceptible effect upon the prehistoric literature of the Arabs. The Hebrews of Arabia, nevertheless, had their poets, whose productions, on the other hand, exhibit a marked coincidence of thought and style with those of their Arab kinsmen. Their sentiments are lofty and admirable, their language pure, and their merit, while inferior to that of the Moallakat, is still far from contemptible. The Book of Job, which has no apparent connection with the rest of the Scriptures, has been pronounced by competent critics a translation of an Arabic poem.

Improvisation, a talent possessed only by those endowed with unusual readiness of perception, a lively imagination, and an inexhaustible command of language, was practised with great success by the itinerant poets of Arabia. From their auditors, a couplet happily applied, by the inspiration of the moment, to some well-known event, elicited far more applause than efforts, however meritorious, which had cost days of arduous labor. This art of extemporaneous composition, which, when thoroughly developed, implies the possession of extraordinary mental ability, carried into Europe by the Moslems, and long employed by the troubadours, now survives only among the lowest class of the Italian peasantry. It is, in our day, most difficult to determine what degree of authenticity may properly be ascribed to the poetry of the ancient Arabs, none of which ascends to a higher antiquity than two hundred years before the Hegira. The unreliability of oral tradition, the variety of dialects, the frequent substitutions of modern phraseology, the bad faith, interpolations, and mistakes of unscrupulous commentators, the corruption and suppression of passages through tribal prejudice—all of these causes have had their share in effecting the gradual deterioration of the grand and stirring poems of Arabia.

It is impossible for us to appreciate the influence exercised by those who had attained to eminence in the poetic art over their imaginative and passionate countrymen. The Arab bard was without exception the most important personage of his tribe. Wealth, rank, beauty, personal popularity, military distinction alike paid tribute to his genius. To his talent for improvisation and versification, he often united the threefold character of statesman, warrior, and knight-errant, and thus became the model of his associates, the idol of the fair sex, and the terror of his enemies, who were as sensitive to the poisoned shafts of his satire as to the keenness of his sword. The most famous of these rhyming paladins, and the author of one of the Moallakat, whose life and achievements have been made the subject of a romance which approaches more nearly to the nature of an epic than any other production in the Arabic language, was Antar. By instinct and training a Bedouin, he was, however, of Arab blood only on his father's side, his mother having been an Abyssinian slave. According to the custom of his country, he shared her lot until his bravery in battle induced his father to emancipate him. His amatory exploits, as well as his daring enterprises against the enemy, made him the admiration of the fiery Arabian youth. It was the regret of Mohammed, often expressed, that he had never seen this knight-errant of the Desert, who shrank from no danger, however appalling, who redressed the wrongs of woman, who restored the property of the plundered, and whose favorite maxim was, "Bear not malice, for of malice good never came."

The unbridled license of the Arabian poet offers a curious commentary on national manners. The most exalted dignity, the sacred attributes of the gods, the pride of opulence, the delicacy of the sex, were not exempt from the attacks of his venom and sarcasm. He exposed with relentless severity the frailties of the wife and daughters of the sheik. He boasted of his own intrigues with a shameless audacity which, under more refined social conditions, could only be atoned for with blood. The immunity he enjoyed was one of the prerogatives of his calling. A certain sacredness of character was believed to attach to the latter by reason of the demoniac possession to which was popularly attributed the inspiration of the poetic faculty. His verses abounded in chivalrous sentiments, but uniformly ignored the claims of religion to the veneration of mankind. No beautiful mythology, like that of ancient Greece, was at hand to prompt the efforts of his muse. The maxims of the luxurious Epicurean were those that exerted the greatest power over his imagination and his life. An idea may be formed of the influence of poetry on the public mind when we remember that the Koreish in vain attempted to bribe the pagan bard Ascha to deliver a panegyric on Mohammed at the commencement of the latter's career, and, unable to secure his compliance, succeeded with much difficulty in purchasing his neutrality and silence at the expense of a hundred camels. The Prophet was so sensitive to the keen thrusts of the satirist, that when Mecca was captured and a general amnesty proclaimed, one of the four unfortunates whom he expressly excluded from this act of clemency was an obscure poet, Habbar-Ibn-Aswad by name, who had published a lampoon against him. The Arabian bard, like his literary descendant the troubadour, was attended by minstrels who chanted his verses, often to the accompaniment of musical instruments. The latter vocation, regarded as degrading by the Bedouin, was always exercised by a slave.

Islamism, while in other directions it zealously promoted the intellectual development of its adherents, fell like a blight upon the poetic taste and genius of

Arabia. The dreams of the poet disappeared before the stern fanaticism of the soldier, who had no time for rhapsodies, and cared for nothing save indulgence in rapine, the acquisition of empire, and the extension of the Faith.

It is now generally admitted that the literary contests said to have taken place during the annual fair at Okhad, where, from poems read before an immense concourse, the one to be suspended in the Kaaba was selected, are apocryphal. Tribes of vagrant robbers who passed ten months of the year in plundering their neighbors would hardly consent to spend the other two in an orderly assembly, composed mainly of their enemies, in determining by a popular vote the comparative merit of their respective poets. The settlement of such rival claims for intellectual precedency by the voice of the people implies a degree of culture and critical acumen certainly not possessed by the Arabs of that age. This idle tale has doubtless been suggested by the literary exhibitions of the Olympian games, and is perhaps indebted to the imagination of some garrulous and mendacious Greek for its origin. It is, however, unquestionable that the poet, as well as the story-teller—that other important personage in the East—was in high favor at all the fairs and assemblies of Arabia. The mixed multitude which, impelled by motives partly mercenary, partly religious, collected on these occasions, and in its hours of leisure listened to the verses of the poet, constantly promoted his inspiration and refined his lays by the hope of applause, the fear of censure, the collision with foreigners, and the powerful influence of tribal emulation.

The later history of the Arabs is decked with all the gorgeous imagery of the East. The fascinations of romance invest and embellish it. With the commonplace facts incident to the various stages of national progress are interwoven narratives of indisputable truth, but which, in their demands upon human credulity, almost surpass the fabulous legends of chivalry or the enchanting tales of Scheherezade. The primitive life of the Arabian people previous to the advent of Mohammed offered no indication of their extraordinary capability for improvement. Commercial intercourse with other nations for ages had, however, enlarged their experience, expanded their faculties, and aroused their ambition. The caravan winding amidst the lonely sand-hills of the Desert—the precursor of those great expeditions which subsequently interchanged the commodities of Asia Minor, Egypt, Andalusia, and India—was also the more important agent of science, of refinement, of civilization. It increased the sum of geographical and historical knowledge. It familiarized the trader and his customers with the manners, the laws, the social systems, the mechanical skill, the arts, and the inventions of the most enterprising nations of the globe. These associations assisted in no small degree to generate the practical utility which, the most important feature of Arab learning, afterwards conferred such substantial blessings on mankind. The phenomenal advance of the race to maturity, impossible without previous preparation, was stimulated by perpetual wars and excitement. Less than one hundred and twenty years intervened between the vagabondage and ignorance of the Desert and the stability and intellectual culture of the great Abbaside and Ommeyade capitals. The career of the Arab was too rapid to be permanent. In four generations it had covered the ground ordinarily traversed in twenty. Its delusive splendor concealed the decay which was coincident with the era of its greatest prosperity. The same causes which facilitated the foundation and advancement of his power and culture were active during their decline, and contributed to their ultimate destruction.

The statement may appear paradoxical, in view of the acknowledged influence of mercantile associations upon the faculties of the human mind; but a certain degree of isolation seems to be necessary, at least in tropical and semi-tropical regions, for the complete development of the arts of civilization; and these arts have usually attained their highest perfection among nations which inhabit peninsulas. Egypt and China, whose reliance was entirely upon their own resources, were the most exclusive of nations in the ancient world, as were Mexico and Peru in the modern. The vast majority of the populations of India, Japan, and Spain had but little intercourse with those outside their boundaries, which were defended by stormy and mysterious seas. In no other countries have the powers of the human intellect, in the creation of all that is grand and imposing, of all that is beautiful, of all that is artistic, of all that contributes to the benefit, the cultivation, and the material improvement of mankind, been manifested as in Greece and Italy. And Arabia, although denied by Nature the advantages of soil and climate enjoyed by more favored lands, yet possessed what, in the crisis of her fate, rendered her superior to all her adversaries,—a race of bold and hardy warriors inured to hardship by the privations of an abstemious life, and by habit and inclination capable of the most arduous and desperate enterprises. Their experience with the surrounding effeminate nations had taught them not only the weakness of the latter, but also how their coveted wealth might be obtained; and at a propitious moment, under the guidance of an impassioned enthusiast, a horde of outlaws, driven from their homes by their scandalized neighbors, became the nucleus of victorious armies the fame of whose gallantry filled the world. And yet, while glorying in the deeds of martial heroism which insured the establishment and maintenance of her

Prophet's faith, she was conscious of the instability of an empire sustained by arms alone, and labored to raise upon more substantial and enduring foundations the splendid fabric of her greatness. The same fervid impulse which prompted and carried to a successful issue the conquest or extermination of those designated by the comprehensive term of infidel was able to adapt itself with singular facility to all the conditions of peace, and to enable the posterity of the half-naked banditti that swarmed around the banner of Mohammed to accomplish results worthy of the most exalted genius, and in every department of knowledge to ascend to the highest rank of those celebrated for their literary and scientific attainments in the most polished communities of Asia and Europe.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND INFLUENCE OF ISLAM

614–712

Comparative Religion, its Interest as a Study—The Benefits of Islam—Arabia at the Birth of Mohammed—Condition of Christendom and the Byzantine Empire—Popular Idea of the Prophet—His Family—His Early Life—The First Revelation—Persecution of the New Sect—The Hegira—Growing Prosperity of Islam—Character of Mohammed—Causes of His Success — Polygamy — The Koran — Its Arrangement, its Legends, its Sublime Maxims, its Absurdities—Its Obligations to other Creeds—The Kiblah—The Pilgrimage and its Ceremonies — Reforms accomplished by Islam—Universal Worship of Force—Corruption of the Religion of Mohammed — Its Wonderful Achievements—Mohammed the Apostle of God.

The study of Comparative Religion is one of the most fascinating, but at the same time one of the most unsatisfactory, of human employments. In historical research, in mathematical calculation, in chemical analysis, in the investigation of natural phenomena, either absolute certainty or an approximate degree of accuracy is attainable. This, however, is obviously impossible in the consideration of questions with which the eternal happiness or misery of mankind may be concerned. Who is competent to determine the relative value of the various religious systems,—always mutually antagonistic, often irreconcilable,—yet all alleged to have proceeded alike from the fiat of Almighty God? Who is to judge of the peculiar qualifications of those who have arrogated to themselves the important office of passing upon their respective merits? Why should certain doctrines be accepted and others repudiated by zealous but un-critical sectaries? Where does this presumed inspiration begin and end? To use the words of the Koran, "What is the infallible? And who shall cause thee to understand what the infallible is?" Who, in short, possesses the touchstone of truth?

The experience of all ages, the history of all nations, have established the melancholy fact that systems of religion are, like institutions of human origin, subject to the ordinary incidents of mortality. They have their age of youthful vigor and enthusiasm; their stationary epoch, when their principles have lost their expansive power; their period of degeneracy and decay. Their duration, like that of created beings, corresponds to the degree of vitality which they may possess; their vitality is in proportion to the intrinsic merit of their doctrines, and their adaptability to the moral nature of man. As omniscience is denied to him, his estimate of the value of a divine revelation must necessarily be speculative and uncertain, largely dependent upon his intellectual capacity, and colored by the influences to which he has been exposed. On the other hand, many learned metaphysicians have argued with transcendent ability that faith is not accidental, and merely derived from volition and association, but is a matter of inexorable necessity, in which the will is absolutely powerless. As a result of inherited prejudice, the principles of every religion always appear heterodox, false, and absurd to sincere believers in other forms of faith. Of all theological dogmas, none have suffered more from the effects of ignorance and injustice than those of Islamism. The name of its founder has for thirteen centuries been a synonym of imposture. His motives have been impugned, his sincerity denied. His character has been branded with every vice which degrades or afflicts mankind. The greatest absurdities, the grossest inhumanity, have been attributed to his teachings. Ecclesiastical malice has exhausted its resources in efforts to blacken his memory. Even in our day, comparatively few persons are even superficially conversant with the doctrines which, in less than a century, were able to usurp the spiritual and temporal dominion of a considerable portion of the habitable globe.

The love of novelty which reigns supreme in the human breast is nowhere more striking in its manifestations than in the facility with which men adopt a fresh revelation. No new religion ever lacks proselytes. Imagination, sentiment, hope, fear, interest, combine to induce its acceptance, notwithstanding the obscurity which may invest its doctrines or the illiteracy which often is the most prominent characteristic of its interpreters; and if the conditions which attend its promulgation are not decidedly unpropitious, it is morally certain of success.

Some embrace it through curiosity, others from conviction, many from motives of selfishness. Its power is frequently in a direct proportion to the awe with which it inspires its votaries. As military glory is most admired by the populace, great prestige must of necessity attach to a creed which proselytes by conquest. On the other hand, apotheosis was considered the highest distinction attainable by the heroes and sovereigns of Pagan antiquity. Individuals whose genius had conferred great benefits upon the human race were assigned by public gratitude to a place among the gods. All the Roman emperors from Cæsar to Constantine were deified. An atmosphere of peculiar sanctity invested the eagles grouped in the post of honor in the camp of the legion. The crucifix and the reliquary were borne in the van of crusading armies. A more or less intimate association has thus always existed between the sacerdotal and the military professions. The latter has repeatedly furthered the projects of the former. The priest has rarely refused to absolve the offences of the orthodox soldier. Most religions have, in fact, been established or maintained by force. When we recall the overthrow of Paganism, the successive attempts to recover the Holy Sepulchre, the reconquest of Spain, the Inquisition, the atrocities attending the subjugation of the New World, the utter devastation of Provence and Languedoc, the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we should certainly not subject to invidious scrutiny the polity of Mohammed, whose history is free from the reproach of persecution, and whose supremacy was only partially established by arms.

The examination and criticism of a religion whose canons have been honored with the implicit and reverent obedience of millions of men; whose dogmas have been recognized by the devout of many diverse races as inspirations of the wisdom of Almighty God; a religion which, by the weapons of argument or by the resistless force of enthusiasm, subverted the power and absorbed the leading principles of other creeds whose traditions had hitherto enthralled the world, and which, despite the degeneracy of its practice, the divisions and consequent antagonism of its sectaries, the vicissitudes of many centuries, and the inevitable accidents of war, persecution, and treason, still manifests an astonishing and, to all appearances, an inexhaustible vitality, is a great and arduous undertaking. The story of Islam, by whose influence the natives of the East and West, heretofore hostile, were joined in a bond of fraternal union and guided through a marvellous career of prosperity and glory, is the realization of what would have ordinarily appeared a most extravagant dream of conquest and dominion, and is without parallel in the annals of humanity. In the moral as in the material world, the most perfect and durable forms and systems usually arrive slowly, and by almost imperceptible gradations, at ultimate maturity. But to this rule Islam was a striking exception. It attained the summit of its greatness, and raised the Arabians to an exalted rank in the family of nations, in a shorter period of time than is generally occupied by a people in passing through the primitive stages of their intellectual development.

It refuted the familiar maxim of the Romans, whose foreign policy was based upon the fomenting of dissensions and the subsequent discomfiture of their enemies, and, assailing its adversaries simultaneously on every side, won its way by a series of victories surpassing, in momentous results, the most renowned triumphs of the consuls and the Cæsars. In the traditions relating to the genealogy and history of its Prophet there is much that is enigmatical and much that is romantic. The latter deduced his origin from Ishmael, whom, with his unfortunate mother, Abraham, the acknowledged head of God's chosen people, had inhumanly abandoned in the Desert to starve.

But in the seventy-one generations which separated Mohammed and Ishmael, a radical change of circumstances had befallen the rival branches of the house of Abraham. The descendants of Isaac, who had been promised the earth for an inheritance, now enslaved or exiled, and proverbial for bad faith, had become reviled and contemned of all men. On the other hand, from Ishmael the vagabond, deserted by his father and renounced by his kindred, had sprung a noble, valiant, and hospitable race, whose destiny was the promotion of civilization and the extension of empire. And in due time the latter, having obtained possession of the opulent regions of the East, tolerated the despised Hebrew only upon payment of tribute, and restricted him to a distinctive costume as a symbol of his degradation. He was compelled, in token of respect, to remove his slippers whenever he passed a mosque, and under penalty of the lash to kneel abjectly in the dust before the haughty Ishmaelite; while the capital of the land from which he had been banished, endeared to him by the memory of his sovereigns and the traditions of his faith, was in the power of his hereditary enemies, whose sacrilegious hands had raised the gilded dome of one of their proudest fanes upon the very spot long consecrated by the most revered associations of his race and his religion. The law of compensation, which controls the fate of man, was at last fulfilled, and retribution, if long delayed, was then exacted with relentless severity.

The benefits wrought by Mohammedans—especially during the Middle Ages—have, until the end of the last century, been silently ignored or studiously depreciated by historians; in some instances through want of information, but, for the most part, because the phenomenal progress of Islam, when compared with the apathetic condition of other religions, suggested a formidable rivalry. But in this age, insatiable of knowledge and equipped with every means of obtaining it, it is no longer possible for clerical intolerance to obscure the splendid achievements of Moslem science. The day has long since past when the labors of astronomers like Ibn-Junis, of historians like Al-Makkari, of philosophers like Averroes, of physicians like Avicenna, and of botanists like Ibn-Beithar, can be treated with obloquy because they were not authorized by the decree of an Ecumenical Council or approved by a bull of his Holiness the Pope.

The history of a religion, the exposition of a form of faith, is not infrequently the memoir of an individual and the chronicle of a race. As a rule, the union of the offices of Prophet and Lawgiver in a single personage deeply impresses the individuality of that personage upon the character of his nation. The annals of the Hebrews are indissolubly bound up with the Holy Scriptures and the precepts of Mosaic law. The mention of ancient Persia suggests at once the texts of the Zendavesta and the ordinances of Zoroaster. The Koran is practically the biography of Mohammed, the tale of his sorrows, his aspirations, his failures, and his triumphs. And what more noble monument could Arabia boast than the proud distinction of having been the home of a prophet and the cradle of a faith for centuries identified with religious toleration, with princely munificence, with scientific investigation, with literary merit,—all intimately associated with her name and with the varying fortunes of her children? The latter, from the first, devoted themselves to the interests of civilization. They settled colonies of skilled artisans in the wake of their armies. They promoted manufactures, encouraged commerce, and in every department of industrial occupation stimulated the efforts of mechanical ingenuity. They developed the science of astronomy. To them chemistry and pharmacy owe their origin. While persevering botanists explored the flora of many lands, the mathematician, in his secluded retreat, expanded and perfected the science of algebra. When a new region was subjected to their rule, all fruits, plants, and herbs, which examination or experience had found to be either edible or curative, were inscribed upon the lists of tribute, and their importation and distribution became compulsory. They branded idleness with contempt; they ennobled labor; and even royalty did not disdain to follow the example of the Prophet, who, with his own hands, assisted in the erection of the mosque of Medina, the first temple of Islam. They translated and preserved for the pleasure and instruction of posterity the immortal productions of the sages of Greece and Rome. They fostered learning, and encouraged its pursuit by maxim, reward, and example, until it became a matter of popular belief, as firmly grounded as the most sacred tradition, that the diligent cultivation of the mental faculties was an imperative religious duty.

In ancient times, to compel the observance of a salutary law, it was connected with public worship and directly sanctioned by the precepts of religion. In this way, hallowed by divine authority, it acquired a force not obtainable by human enactment, and conclusively indicated the wisdom of the sovereign or lawgiver who promulgated it. It was thus with circumcision among the Jews, with the cultivation of the soil in Mesopotamia, and with irrigation in Egypt, where the Nile was deified as the creator and preserver of the harvests and the source of the material prosperity of the nation. Mohammed was not blind to the advantages to be secured by this theocratic supervision of the affairs of mortals, and, by recourse to it, enforced the adoption and practice of many healthful customs and profitable employments whose effects upon the subjects of his successors were of the greatest importance.

The contagion of superstition, the impression produced by the grandeur of scenery, and the periodical recurrence of mysterious natural phenomena must always be attentively considered in determining the philosophical belief and religious tendencies of a people. Intimate relations with Egypt, sustained for a vast but unknown period of time, have left ineffaceable traces upon the traditions of Arabia. In the religious system of the former country there was one Supreme Being. All other divinities were but manifestations of his majesty and omnipotence concealed under different names. From him emanated the multifarious triads, the personification of the Nile, the countless array of gods to whom the days, the months, and even the very productions of the earth, were sacred. The great secret that these inferior deities were mere abstractions proceeding from a common Essence, to be eventually absorbed into it,—a fate to which even the soul of man, after divers transmigrations, was subject,—was jealously guarded by the Egyptian priesthood, and was the chief of its famous mysteries. The Sabeans of Yemen, instructed through their mercantile relations with the inhabitants of the Valley of the Nile, had long been familiar with the idea of a Supreme God and the personified attributes of His power and dignity. This doctrine had spread from the South, and, at the date of the advent of Mohammed, underlay the idolatrous worship of which Mecca was the centre, and whose ramifications extended in every direction to the borders of the Peninsula. A considerable number of the more intelligent Arabs who professed adherence to the religion of Abraham, yet, in fact, knew nothing of that religion except that it was monotheistic, repudiated all forms of idolatry, and styled themselves Hanifs—a word variously defined as "Incliners" and "Heretics." The Manichean conception of the Spirit of Darkness—or, in other words, that important and enterprising personage the Persian devil, without whose presence no modern creed would seem to be complete—was also unknown to the ancient inhabitants of Arabia. As the idea was imported,—no branch of the Semitic race having been originally acquainted with it,—it probably travelled in the train of Cambyses when he invaded the Desert; although Iblis, the Arabic name by which this spirit is popularly designated, is evidently of European derivation and a corruption of the Greek Διάβολος.

Nor have the physical features of the landscape less to do with the formation of man's moral impressions, and the direction of his impulses, than the reciprocal interchange of the ideas of contiguous nations. This is apparent in even a greater degree than the influence of soil and climate in the modification of his physical aspect and temperament. The more imposing those features, the more profound the emotions they excite; and, partly for this reason, Asia, which Nature has endowed with the most stupendous manifestations of her energy, has been prolific of those superstitions which have exercised the most extensive and lasting dominion over the human mind.

For more than a century before the birth of Mohammed, the most deplorable ignorance had obscured the face of the Christian world. The gentleness and beauty of the religion of Jesus had been supplanted by the direst fanaticism; its altars had been profaned by heathen sacrifices and the adoration of images; its priesthood had become inconceivably corrupt and immoral. The countless sects evoked by the machinations and worldly ambition of the clergy had, by mutual recrimination, revolting crimes, relentless persecution of their adversaries, and obstinate refusal to listen to any plan of reconciliation, almost destroyed the faith of reasonable men in every religion. Each of these sects had a leader who was regarded by his followers as endowed, to a greater or less degree, with that mysterious power conferred by divine inspiration. Disputes, frequently settled by massacre, were constantly maintained upon abstruse and frivolous questions in their very nature unanswerable; the precepts of justice and the laws of morality were contemptuously disregarded; and the sacerdotal class, instead of setting an example of piety and moderation to its congregations, was conspicuous in the daily saturnalia of rapine, lust, and murder. The Church had long since departed from the simplicity and purity of its original institution. For a century only after the death of the Saviour it had remained free from the influence of schismatic doctrines. While in comparative obscurity and acknowledged weakness, it offered no inducements to the disturbing spirit of fanatical innovators or to the selfish schemes of political aggrandizement and ecclesiastical ambition. In the beginning, divided into a number of federated republics practically independent, yet bound together by a common interest, governed by their own laws, relying upon their own resources, guided by the wisdom of their own ministers, their thoroughly organized polity, their obstinacy, their claims to superior holiness, naturally excited the odium of the Pagan populace, and frequently provoked the wrath and the interference of Imperial authority. From a condition of meekness, humility, and self-abnegation, the Church had become the prey of hostile factions, and was already tainted with scandal. Its synods were polluted with the blood of contending sectaries. Its councils resounded with the unseemly disputes and mutual recriminations of prelates more ambitious for the attainment of supreme power than for the discovery of divine truth. The Trinitarian controversy had nourished prejudices which centuries of apparent tranquillity had failed to eradicate. The spirit of persecution, incomprehensible to the polytheists, the essence of whose creed was universal toleration, and who could not appreciate the motives impelling the Christian to the employment of force to establish his doctrines, had early begun to manifest itself. Monasticism, synonymous with ignorance and intolerance, represented the sentiments and hopes of the most degraded of the populace in every community of the Empire. At Alexandria and Nicea it had forced, by weight of numbers and by turbulent demonstrations of violence, the adoption of some of the most important articles of Christian faith. In every ecclesiastical feud it had invariably espoused the cause of bigotry and imposture. The monk of the sixth century united in his character the inconsistent attributes of the priest and the politician, the saint and the demagogue. His retreat in the solitude of the desert was visited by thousands of weeping penitents, suppliants for the doubtful but cherished privilege of his blessing. With his companions, armed with clubs and stones, he fomented disorder in the streets of great capitals. His voluntary renunciation of the follies of the world was no bar to his greed of power. He dictated the policy of the Church. He settled involved points of casuistry. He formulated canons of ecclesiastical discipline. He enforced the claims of his faction by intrigues, by corruption, by the commission of the most revolting crimes. He aspired to and often attained the episcopal dignity. The superior numbers, the fanatical spirit, the unanimous resolution of his order, gave him a preponderating influence in the Church not to be heedlessly resisted. Before the imperial organization of the Papacy, the monk was the dominant factor in the determination of the laws, the measures, and the regulations of Christendom.

It must be remembered that at that time there was no established, centralized, sacerdotal authority. Nevertheless, for more than a century, imperial officials, designated for that purpose, had determined the degrees and inflicted the punishment of heresy. Confiscation, banishment, torture, and death threatened all who refused to subscribe to the doctrines which, varying with different reigns, were promulgated as the momentary and uncertain standards of orthodoxy. The incomprehensibility of a dogma was considered an infallible indication of its truth. The philosopher was then, as now, stigmatized as the implacable enemy of religion. A reign of terror overspread the empire. Every scholar became an object of suspicious aversion. His neighbors shunned his company. The clergy anathematized him from the pulpit. Informers dogged his footsteps and intruded upon his privacy. Indifference to religious duties, or an unguarded statement frequently distorted by malice, was a sufficient cause for imprisonment. The discovery of an heretical passage in a volume of his library rarely failed to provoke a sentence of death. Such measures, equivalent to a proscription of knowledge, produced the most lamentable consequences. Literary occupations became to all intents and purposes criminal. Everywhere valuable collections of books were hastily consigned to the flames by their owners, apprehensive of being compromised by their contents. Oratory, except that of the pulpit, could not survive such restrictions. Public sentiment, controlled by ecclesiastical prejudice, became inimical to the maintenance of even ordinary institutions of learning. A blind reverence for the Church, and a disposition to enforce obedience to its mandates by the merciless employment of the secular arm, were popularly regarded as the duties of every member of society. It was the ominous inauguration of that fearful power which afterwards culminated in the irresponsible despotism of the Vatican.

The Roman Pontiff had not yet stretched forth his mighty hand from the seat of ancient empire to allay dissension, and to enforce obedience to the edicts of the greatest hierarchy that has ever arisen to enchain the intelligence and repress the independent aspirations of mankind. The final decisions of councils had not been formulated upon controverted points of doctrine. The Patriarch of Constantinople—first in ecclesiastical precedence, yet almost rivalled in pomp and prestige by the great episcopal dignitaries of Antioch, Alexandria, and Carthage—exacted with difficulty the reverence of the giddy and scoffing mob of the capital, and could not always maintain the dignity of his office, even in the presence of his sovereign, who was sometimes a skeptic and often a tyrant. Nor was the civil power, to which the ecclesiastical system was still jealously subordinated, in a less degraded condition. The authority of the Emperor was persistently defied in the precincts of his own palace, which, with the Cathedral of Saint Sophia, had become the theatre of the treasonable plots and licentious intrigues of infamous combinations of every class and nationality, and where a portentous union of monks, eunuchs, and women reigned unquestioned and supreme. A cumbrous and pompous etiquette; a theatrical display of costumes and devices; a court swarming with buffoons and parasites; an atmosphere of cowardice, duplicity, effeminacy, and corruption had supplanted the high sense of national honor, the austere dignity, the proud consciousness of superior manhood which, in the early days of republican simplicity and imperial grandeur, marked the exercise of Roman power. The incursions of pirates, which the diminished naval power of the emperors was inadequate to check, had driven commerce from the sea.

Intestine broils, and the lawless conduct of the barbarian soldiery who chafed at the restraints of discipline, and whose incessant and exorbitant demands upon the imperial treasury had aided not a little to impoverish the country, rendered agricultural operations unsafe and unprofitable, and land was no longer tilled except in the immediate vicinity of large cities. Whole provinces, which, under the Romans, had flourished like a succession of gardens, now abandoned and uninhabited, were growing up with forests and relapsing into the wilderness of primeval times. The dire effects of barbarian warfare were conspicuous in every province of the Empire. The fruits of centuries of civilization had disappeared with the conditions which had been favorable to their maturity and to the political corruption and moral degeneracy which, more than the fortunes of war, had contributed to their annihilation. The proud title of Roman citizen, once coveted alike by foreign princes and aspiring plebeians, had been erased from the tables whereon were inscribed the most exalted distinctions of nations. Society no longer wore the alluring aspect which it had exhibited under the luxurious dominion of the Cæsars. The patrician, deprived of property and freedom, reluctantly swelled the train of barbaric pomp in the city which had been the scene of his extravagance, his tyranny, and his vices. The slave who had fled to the camp of Alaric or Attila now ruled in the palace which had formerly witnessed his humiliation, and was served by the children of those who but a few months before had made him the victim of their cruelty and caprice.

The face of the country, repeatedly overrun by swarms of ruthless savages, presented a picture of hopeless desolation. The trail of the Gothic or Lombard marauder could be traced by heaps of whitened bones, by dismantled cities, by ravaged fields and fire-swept hamlets. The beautiful temples of antiquity, which had survived the decay of Paganism and the assaults of Christianity, were defaced or ruined. The exquisite memorials of classic art, the triumphs of the Grecian sculptor, were broken and scattered. Vases, whose elegance and symmetry had called forth the admiration of all who beheld them, had been melted for the sake of the bronze and silver of which they were composed. The gardens which had been the pride of the capital had been trampled under the hoofs of the Gothic cavalry. Here and there, amidst a heap of blackened ruins, arose a crumbling wall or a group of tottering columns, which alone remained to mark the site of a once magnificent shrine of Venus or Apollo. The repression of general intelligence and individual ambition among the masses had always been a leading maxim of imperial policy. No system of education was provided. All exertion was discouraged. The populace was for generations provided with food and amusement by the government. There was no inducement to mental or physical activity. The natural march of human destiny, the improvement of man's physical and social condition, was arrested. Enjoyment of the comforts of life rendered labor unnecessary. The paternal supervision and generosity of the sovereign made the criticism, or even the discussion, of public affairs irksome, ungrateful, dangerous. There being no longer any incentive to progress, society, in obedience to the organic law of its existence, began to rapidly retrograde towards barbarism; a condition to which the division of the people into castes—noble, plebeian, mercantile, military, and sacerdotal—greatly contributed. Through ideas of mistaken piety, and allured by the prospect of idleness and comparative ease, a multitude of able-bodied men had withdrawn from the occupations of active life to the seclusion of the cloister, whence they issued at intervals, when summoned to raze some Pagan temple; to influence, by the terror of their presence, the vacillating spirit of an ecclesiastical assembly; or to wreak the pitiless vengeance of their superiors upon some virtuous philosopher whose intelligence was not profound enough to grasp the meaning of a theological mystery. The enterprising general who had raised himself from a subordinate command in Britain to the imperial throne, and who, for reasons of state policy, had adopted and made compulsory the ceremonial of a religion whose benign precepts the base profligacy of his whole life insulted, possessed at least the stern and rugged virtues of a soldier. His effeminate descendants, however, both ignorant and careless of the arts of war and government, and devoted to the practice of every vice, had abandoned the administration to the perfidious and venal instincts of their retainers and slaves. Through the incompetency of the rulers, the insatiable ambition of the priests, and the unbridled license of the mercenaries who composed the bulk of the army, all desire of the majority of the people—in which was, of course, included the useful classes of farmer and artisan—for the improvement of their circumstances had yielded to a sluggish indifference to their fate. In a few generations social isolation became so thorough that the community of thought and interest indispensable to national prosperity ceased to exist; and this seclusion of caste, increasing in a direct ratio with rank, finally fastened upon the most noble families the stigma of exceptional ignorance. Indeed, in the palace itself, whence ecclesiastical bigotry had expelled all valuable knowledge, the education of princes was entrusted to nurses and domestic servants, whose pernicious influence was speedily exhibited in the superstitious fears and arrogant behavior of their pupils, the future masters of the Roman Empire. The fusion of races had produced mongrel types, in whose characters were developed the most objectionable and vicious traits of their depraved progenitors. Constant intercourse with barbarians had transformed the polished language of Homer and Plato into an uncouth dialect, where the gutturals of the Danube, mingling with the scarcely less discordant accents of the Nile and the Rhone, had overwhelmed the copious and elegant idiom of the Greek poets and historians. The fanaticism of an intolerant sect and the weakness of a succession of impotent sovereigns had extinguished the spirit of Pagan philosophy and ancient learning.

Since the erection of the famous church of Saint Sophia—the final effort of the genius of Byzantine architecture—that art had fallen into desuetude, and such of the famous structures of the ancients as survived were used as quarries, whence were derived the materials for the basilica and the palaces of the wealthy and luxurious patriarch and bishop. But this, unhappily, was not the worst of the prevalent evils of the time. An organized conspiracy against learning existed, and was most active in those quarters where education, however imperfect, should at least have suggested the importance of preserving the priceless remains of antiquity. The art of making parchment had, with many other useful inventions, been lost, and, in consequence, writing materials had become rare and expensive. The monk, too idle to invent, but ever ready to destroy, soon devised means for supplying this deficiency. Invading the public libraries, he diligently collected all the available manuscripts upon which were inscribed the thoughts of classic writers—of whom many are now only known to us by name—and, erasing the characters, used their pages to record the legends of his spurious saints and apocryphal martyrs. It is not beyond the range of probability that the original books of the New Testament, falling during these evil days into the hands of persons ignorant of Greek, may have undergone a similar fate; which hypothesis may also account for the thirty thousand different readings of which learned divines admit that the Gospels and Epistles are susceptible. The manifold and prodigious achievements of Roman civilization—its palaces, its temples, its amphitheatres, its aqueducts, its triumphal arches; its majestic forums, with their colonnades of snowy marble adorned with the statues of the heroes, the philosophers, the legislators of antiquity; its military roads; its marvels of mechanical engineering; its magnificent works of art; its eternal monuments of literature; the graceful legends of its mythology, perpetuated by the genius of the sculptor in creations of unrivalled excellence; the glowing words of its orators which stir the blood after the lapse of twenty centuries; the prestige of its conquests; the wise principles of its civil polity, generally enlightened, often audacious, always successful—were but trifles in the eyes of the debased Byzantine when compared with a fragment of the true cross, or a homily preached by some unclean and fanatic anchorite upon the metaphysical subleties of the Trinity or the theological value of a diphthong.

Such, then, was the condition of the Christian Church and the Byzantine Empire at the close of the sixth century; to such a deplorable extent had barbarian encroachment, social corruption, and sectarian controversy undermined the foundation of both Church and State. In spite of its degradation, the latter represented the highest embodiment of mental culture and political organization which had survived the incessant depredations of barbarian armies and the demoralizing effects of generations of misrule; where the character of the monarch, both before and after his elevation to the throne, was dominated by the passions and infected with the vices of the most wicked and infamous of mankind. Throughout Europe the state of affairs was even more deplorable. The Goths were masters of the continent, and the Vandals, traversing the Spanish Peninsula and planting their victorious standards upon the northern coast of Africa, had, after the commission of atrocities which have made their name proverbial, driven the descendants of Hannibal and Hamilcar into the desert and the sea. The schools of Athens—that sole remaining seat of philosophical discussion and free inquiry in the world—had been suppressed, a hundred and fifty years before, by Justinian. The descendants of the Cæsars, stripped of their splendid inheritance and reduced to degrading vassalage, cowered beneath the scowling glances of the skin-clad savages who had issued in countless numbers from the forests of Germany and the shores of the Baltic. The effigies of the gods, the masterpieces of the skill of the Augustan age, had been tumbled from their pedestals, and the fetichism introduced by the strangers had been superseded by a corrupt form of Christianity scarcely less contemptible and fully as idolatrous. Rome had twice been sacked; Milan had been razed to the ground; prosperous seaports had fallen into decay; the fairest fields of Italy had been made desolate, her highways were overgrown with grass, her aqueducts were broken, her fertile Campagna, once the paradise of the capital, had become a pestilential marsh, whose vapors were freighted with disease and death. Among the miserable, half-famished, and turbulent population of the cities, riot and sedition were frequent, but were hardly noticed by the haughty barbarian ruler, so long as the outbreak did not seriously menace his life or his dignity. Civil war, relentless in atrocity, completed the devastation begun by barbaric conquest and servile tyranny. The army, filled with traitors, offered no warrant for the stability of government. Informers, that pest of a decadent state, swarmed in the Byzantine capital. Oppressive taxation, enforced by torture, impoverished the opulent. Promiscuous massacre, instituted upon the most frivolous pretexts, intimidated the poor. There was no loyalty, no sense of national honor, no appreciation of the mutual obligations of prince and people. The martial spirit which had been the distinguishing characteristic of ancient Rome was extinct. The proverbial discipline of the legions had been supplanted by license and disorder. Immunity from foreign incursion was secured by the ignominious and obnoxious expedient of tribute. Yet, in the midst of this accumulation of horrors which threatened the total destruction of a society already thoroughly disorganized, numbers of resolute men existed in every community who, while despoiled and oppressed, had not entirely abandoned themselves to despair, and in the minds of many of these, imperceptibly to the masses, and, indeed, scarcely discernible save by the most acute and sagacious observer, a great moral revolution was passing. The misfortunes which had befallen in succession the Pagan and the Christian religions had weakened the hold of both upon the reverence and affections of the multitude. Persons familiar with the Gospels, and with whom the Apocrypha claimed as much respect as the remaining portions of the Scriptures, looked forward to the coming of a reformer, known as the Paraclete, or Comforter, repeatedly promised in the Bible, whose mission was to restore to mankind, in its pristine purity, the truth as expounded by Christ. The material advantages which might accrue from the realization of this prediction were fully appreciated by the heads of a considerable number of contemporary sects—among them the Gnostics, the Cerintheans, the Montanists, and the Manicheans, each of whom confidently asserted that he was the heavenly messenger referred to and that all others were impostors. The Gospel of St. Barnabas is said, upon very respectable authority, to have originally contained the word Περικλῦτὸς, " Illustrious," instead of Παράκλητος, " Comforter;" and to have been subsequently altered, with a view to checking the increasing number of claimants to divine inspiration, whose pretensions were becoming troublesome and dangerous. Moslem ingenuity has shrewdly availed itself of this prophecy, which popular credulity accepted as a direct announcement of the coming Mohammed, whose name, " The Illustrious," is the Arabic equivalent of Περικλῦτὸς.

It is also stated in the most ancient chronicles that a prophet called Ahmed, or Mohammed, had for centuries been expected in Arabia, where the Gospels were widely distributed; and it is therefore possible that a word written in an unknown tongue, a thousand miles from Mecca, may have had no inconsiderable share in determining the political and religious destinies of a large portion of the human race.

All things considered, perhaps no more auspicious time could have been selected for the announcement of a system of belief which based its claims to public attention upon the specious plea that it was not an innovation, but a reform, the purification of a mode of worship which had been practised for ages. It is usually far easier, because more consonant with the prejudices of human nature, to introduce an entirely new religion than to engraft changes, no matter how beneficial, upon the old. Mankind regards with eager curiosity a recent communication from Heaven, yet instinctively shrinks from serious interference with the time-honored ceremonial and revered traditions of a popular and long-established faith. But in Arabia, as has already been remarked, while there were innumerable shrines and temples and a host of idols, there was in reality no deep-seated religious feeling. The prevalent worship was maintained through the influence of long association rather than by any general belief in its truth, its wisdom, or its benefits. The claims of kindred, the maintenance of tribal honor, and the inexorable obligation of revenge had far greater weight with the Bedouin than the respect he owed to the factitious observances of his creed or the doubtful veneration he professed for the innumerable deities of his pantheon. The absurdity of their attributes, the inability of their gods to change or to resist the operations of nature, had long been tacitly recognized by the Arabs. Their idols partook of the character of the fetich, whose favor was propitiated with gifts, whose obstinacy was punished by violence. Long familiarity had lessened or entirely abrogated the awe with which they had once been regarded. The system which they represented had fallen behind the intelligence of the age, limited though that might be amidst the prejudices and superstitions of the Desert. A wide-spread and silent, but none the less vehement, protest against polytheism had arisen. At no time in the history of the Peninsula had been evinced such a disposition for reconciliation and compromise. In Arabia, therefore, as well as in the other countries of Asia, the season was eminently propitious to the promulgation of a new religion.

The ignorance of the natural talents, general characteristics, and daily habits of the Prophet of Arabia almost universally prevalent, even among persons of education and of more than ordinary intellectual attainments, is extraordinary; especially when the abundant facilities for information upon these points are considered. No name in history has been subjected to such fierce assaults by sectarian bigotry and theological rancor as his. The popular idea of Mohammed is that he was a vulgar impostor, licentious, cunning, brutal, and unscrupulous; periodically insane from repeated attacks of epilepsy; given to the practice of fraudulent miracles; a monster, who hesitated at no crime that would further his ends; who wrote a book called the Koran, which is full of sensual images, and describes heaven as a place especially set apart for the unrestricted indulgence of the animal passions. In former times public credulity went still farther, and Christian writers of the eleventh century, and even later, were in the habit of representing the greatest of iconoclasts—who excepted from the clemency of the victor only the adorers of fire and of idols—as a false god; a conception which, indicated by the familiar word "mummery," has been incorporated into our language. Afterwards he was considered merely as a propagator of heresy, and, punished as such, he figures in the immortal work of Dante:

> "Poi che l'un pié per girsene sospese,
> Maometto;"

and, finally, the absurdity of ignorance having reached its culmination, he was described as a camel-thief, and an apostate cardinal who preached a spurious doctrine through envy, because he had failed to reach the coveted dignity of Pope! Motives of ecclesiastical jealousy and religious intolerance led also to the suppression of information and the falsification of truth respecting the Koran. Hardly one person in ten thousand has read a translation of it; indeed, this feat has been repeatedly declared an impossibility, on account of the monotonous and prosaic character of its contents; nor has one foreigner in a million perused the original, which, it may be added, cannot be appropriately rendered into another tongue. No complete rendition of this famous book into a living language was made for eleven hundred years after the death of Mohammed, and to-day not more than a dozen versions, all told, exist. It has been, moreover, a rule, subject to but few exceptions and those of recent date, that translations, commentaries, and analyses of the Koran, edited by misbelievers, have been written with the express design of casting odium upon the Prophet and his followers. Under such unfavorable circumstances, an impartial examination of the doctrines of Islam was impossible to one not versed in Arabic, and the public mind, which received its impression of such subjects largely from the pulpit, obstinately refused to consider any view which was at variance with its preconceived opinions. To obtain a competent idea of the principles, the virtues, and the defects of the religion which he established, it will not be unprofitable to glance for a moment at the salient points of the career and character of this wonderful man, the most prominent of his country, and the most illustrious of his race.

Among the ancient tribes of Arabia, highest in rank, most esteemed for intelligence and courage in a nation of poets and warriors, and renowned for a generous hospitality, was that of the Koreish, the hereditary guardians of the temple of Mecca. Proud of their distinguished ancestry and of the exalted position they enjoyed by reason of their office, which its religious functions invested with a dignity not inferior to that of royalty itself, and superior to all other employments in a country where the jealous independence of the people precluded the exercise of kingly power, the influence of the Koreish over their countrymen was unbounded. The annual pilgrimage to the Bait-Allah, or "House of God," when hostilities were suspended, and devotees and merchants, rhymers and thieves, met upon a common equality in the enclosure of the temple—an occasion which is said to have called together the brightest minds of the Peninsula to contend in friendly rivalry for the prize of literary distinction—was the most important event of the year to the Arabian, and was particularly advantageous to the perpetuation of the wealth and authority of the Koreish. Some of the tribe enjoyed the exclusive privilege of distributing water and provisions among the pilgrims during their sojourn in the Holy City—an employment originally gratuitous, but afterwards a lucrative monopoly; others had charge of the buildings of the shrine; others, again, were the custodians of the sacred banner, which was only raised upon the occasion of the annual re-union of the Kaaba, or when the safety of Mecca was threatened by war or sedition. The Koreish, moreover, aspired to a state of petty sovereignty; they despatched embassies to the neighboring tribes, made treaties, established regulations for the departure and arrival of caravans, which secured an organized, and consequently a more safe and profitable, traffic with surrounding nations, and exercised a nominal jurisdiction in both civil and religious matters over the entire Peninsula. Elated by their success, and by the homage universally paid them, they boldly abrogated many of the ancient ceremonies connected with the national worship, and substituted others better calculated for the advancement of their pecuniary interests or the gratification of their political ambition. Some of these new regulations were unjust, and, as may be easily conjectured, were accepted with great reluctance by a population so opposed to innovation and impatient of restraint as that of Arabia; and the fact that they were adopted without serious disturbance shows conclusively that the attachment of the Arab to the gods of his country bore no approximate ratio to the awe with which he regarded their powerful guardians. In time, however, the rivalry of influential chieftains of the various divisions of the tribe produced mutual distrust and enmity; dissensions became frequent, and the national influence of the Koreish, which the hearty co-operation of their leaders could alone sustain, began to be seriously impaired.

Of one of the haughtiest clans of this distinguished tribe—the Beni-Hashem—was born, in the year 570 of the Christian era, Mohammed, known to misbelievers as the False Prophet, and to the Moslems as the Messenger of God. A strange fatality, which is evidently based upon something more substantial than the uncertain authority of tradition, appears to have attended his family both before and after his birth. The household of his grandfather, Abd-al-Muttalib, although it contained several daughters, could boast of only one son,—a circumstance which, to a man of noble birth, in a country like Arabia, where a chieftain's consideration was founded upon the number of his male descendants, where female relatives were classed with camels and horses as chattels, and were often buried alive to get rid of them, was looked upon as a disgrace as well as a misfortune. In bitterness of spirit, the sheik betook himself to the Kaaba, and invoked the aid of Hobal, the presiding genius of the assembled deities of the nation. At the conclusion of his supplications he promised that, if ten sons should be born to him, one of them should be sacrificed upon the altar of the god. The prayer was answered, and in due time inexorable religious obligation demanded the fulfilment of the vow. Accompanied by his sons, Abd-al-Muttalib again approached the shrine of Hobal, and the customary lots having been cast, the god made choice of Abdallah, who subsequently became the father of Mohammed. Abdallah was the favorite of his parents and the idol of his kindred; his manners possessed a rare fascination; he excelled the most accomplished of his tribe in the arts of poetry and eloquence, and his manly beauty has been celebrated by the extravagant praise of his countrymen. Appalled at the prospect of losing his best-beloved child, Abd-al-Muttalib was in despair, when the shrewdness of a female diviner proposed an ingenious solution of the difficulty. The established compensation for homicide, when the injured family was willing to accept one, was ten camels; and the prophetess suggested that Abd-al-Muttalib again consult the deity, in the hope that he might be propitious and consent to receive the less valuable sacrifice. The mystic arrows were once more shaken and drawn, and, for the second time, Abdallah was devoted to death. The father doubled the number of camels with the same result; but, nothing daunted, persevered until the tenth lot had been drawn, when the god deigned to accept the costly ransom. Thus upon the cast of a die depended the regeneration of the Arabian people, the conquest and subversion of the Byzantine and Persian empires, the impulse of modern scientific inquiry, and the future hopes of the Moslem world!

Mohammed was a posthumous child. His father died while on a journey to Medina, and left to his widow Amina little save the memory of his domestic virtues, and a reputation for manly courage and unblemished integrity. The boy passed his early years, as was the custom at Mecca, with one of the tribes of the Desert, where the coarse fare and active life of the Bedouin developed and strengthened a frame naturally robust and vigorous. At the age of five he returned to his mother's home, where, within a few months, he was left an orphan. His grandfather Abd-al-Muttalib then took charge of him until the death of the former two years afterwards, when Mohammed was taken into the family of his uncle Abu-Talib. The successive bereavements of relatives to whom he was devotedly attached had no small effect in determining the character of the future Prophet, already thoughtful and reserved beyond his years, and imparted a permanent tinge of sadness to his life. When he grew older he was employed by his uncle as a shepherd, an occupation considered by the Arabs as degrading, and only proper to be exercised by slaves and women. In his twenty-sixth year his handsome face and figure, and his reputation for honesty, which had acquired for him the flattering title of Al-Amin, "The Faithful," attracted the attention of Khadijah, a wealthy widow and a distant relative, who made him a proposal of marriage, which he accepted. Khadijah was forty years old, and had already been twice married; yet for twenty-five years which intervened before her death—and long after she must have lost her attractiveness—Mohammed never failed in the duties of a constant and affectionate husband. She bore him six children, four girls and two boys, of whom the daughters alone survived the period of infancy. When he reached the age of forty, a great change came over Mohammed, and there appeared the first positive indication of his aversion to the established worship of his country. His mother, who seems to have been a woman of highly excitable temperament, had transmitted to him a hypersensitive condition of the nervous system, which developed occasional attacks of muscular hysteria, a disease rarely affecting the masculine sex. Long accustomed to abstinence, contemplation, and revery, he contracted the habit of seeking solitude, to muse upon the moral condition of himself and his countrymen; and as he grew older, and especially after his fortunate marriage had removed the necessity for labor, the passion for dreaming grew upon him. He often betook himself to Mount Hira, where a recluse once had his abode; and for days at a time, with but little food and depriving himself of sleep, in tears and mental agony, he strove to solve the problem of divine truth. As continued fasting, excitement, and solitude inevitably produce hallucinations, it was not long before Mohammed believed himself visited by an angel, the bearer of celestial tidings. Doubtful at first of the significance of these startling visions, and in his enfeebled condition easily terrified, he fancied he was possessed by devils, and was almost driven to suicide. Finally, mastering his emotion, he returned to Mecca, and from that time visitations of the angel—who declared himself to be Gabriel—were frequent. In the original revelation, Mohammed was addressed as the "Messenger of Allah," and was directed to preach the unity of God to his erring and misguided countrymen. His converts in the beginning were very few and composed of the members of his own family, his wife being the first believer. The new doctrines made slow progress; apprehension of the summary interference of the ruling powers made the proselytes cautious, and they rehearsed its texts behind locked doors and in the most private apartments of their houses. At the expiration of four years the adherents of Islam had only reached the insignificant number of thirty-nine souls. But now Mohammed grew bolder; expounded his doctrines before the Kaaba itself; openly advocated the destruction of idols, and denounced the unbelieving Arabs as devoted to the horrors of everlasting fire. The impassioned oratory of the Great Reformer had at first no appreciable effect. Most of his auditors regarded him as under the influence of an evil spirit; some ridiculed, others reviled him; but respect for his family and a wholesome dread of blood-revenge protected him from serious violence. In vain did he depict in words of thrilling eloquence the joys of heaven and the tortures of hell; his exhortations were lost upon the skeptical Arab, whose religion was a matter of hereditary custom, and who, in common with the other members of the Semitic race, had no belief in an existence beyond the grave. At length his denunciations became so furious as to raise apprehensions among the Koreish that their political supremacy, as well as the lucrative employments of their offices, might be endangered. A solemn deputation of the chiefs of the tribe waited upon Abu-Talib, the head of the family to which Mohammed belonged, and demanded that the daring apostate should be delivered over to their vengeance. This Abu-Talib, although himself an idolater, without hesitation, declined to do, and, in consequence of his refusal, the entire clan of the Beni-Hashem was placed under an interdict. No one would trade or associate with its members, and for two years they were imprisoned in a quarter of the city by themselves, where they endured great hardships. Nothing can exhibit more prominently the family attachment of the Arab and his high sense of honor than the self-sacrifice implied by this event, for it must not be forgotten that the large majority of those who suffered with Mohammed had no confidence in the truth of his mission, but were still devoted to the idolatrous and barbarous rites of the ancient faith.

The cause of Islam had received a severe blow, and the threats and armed hostility of its adversaries boded ill for its future success. The Moslems who did not belong to the Koreish sought refuge with the Christian king of Abyssinia, who peremptorily refused to surrender them upon the demand of an embassy from Mecca. At length, through very shame, the interdict was removed; the members of the imprisoned band came forth once more to mingle with their townsmen, and the exiles were permitted to return in peace. But persecution had not intimidated Mohammed, and his condemnation of idolatry and its supporters increased in violence. His uncle and protector, Abu-Talib, having died, his position daily became more critical. A fortunate occurrence, however, soon opened an avenue of escape. Some years before, a handful of the people of Medina had secretly embraced his doctrines and sworn fealty to him as their temporal sovereign. Their numbers had greatly increased, and now, in acceptance of an invitation tendered him by these zealous proselytes, Mohammed prepared to withdraw from the midst of his enemies to the proffered asylum at Medina. The inhabitants of the latter city, who were principally agriculturists, were heartily despised by the Meccans, who considered every occupation but those of war, plunder, and the cheating of pilgrims derogatory to the dignity of an Arab. The irreconcilable rivalry between the two principal towns of the Hedjaz had much to do with the adoption of Islam by the Medinese. The influence of the numerous Jews of Medina had materially affected the religion of that locality, and their predictions of the speedy coming of the Messiah, and the bestowal of the possessions of the Gentiles upon his chosen people, had attracted the attention, and at times aroused the fears, of the idolaters of that city. When, therefore, the report was circulated that a prophet had arisen at Mecca, the Medinese naturally concluded that he must be the Messiah expected by the Hebrews, and they determined to forestall the latter by being the first to extend to him a welcome, and thereby secure his favor. It was from these motives that the alliance between Mohammed and the citizens of Medina was concluded; an alliance whose results were little anticipated by the parties to its provisions, and whose importance has been disclosed by the portentous events of many subsequent centuries. Intelligence of this proceeding having reached the Koreish, they prepared for decisive measures, and held a meeting, in which, without apparently taking any precautions to conceal their design, the assassination of Mohammed was resolved upon. The latter, having received timely warning, escaped by night, with his friend Abu-Bekr, and, concealed in a cave in the mountains, eluded the vigilance of his enemies until a few days afterwards they found means to reach Medina. This event occurred in the year 622 A.D., and, marking the era of the Hegira or " Flight," is, as is well known, the starting-point of Moslem chronology. Its usefulness, however, anticipated its legality for three hundred years, and it was not publicly authorized by law until the tenth century.

On his arrival, the first care of the Prophet was the erection of a mosque and the institution and arrangement of the ritual of Islam; the next, the reconciliation of the two hostile Arab factions whose tumults kept the city in an uproar; and the third—the only task in which he was unsuccessful—the conversion of the Jews. Hardly was he domiciled at Medina before he abandoned the continence which had hitherto adorned his life and placed his character in such a favorable light when compared with the excesses of his libidinous countrymen, and by degrees increased his harem until it numbered, including wives and concubines, nearly a score of women. And now appeared also other changes of a religious and political nature, when the humility and patience of the preacher were eclipsed by the ambitious plans of the sovereign, eventually realized in the proselytism of entire nations and the intoxication and glory of foreign conquest. The employment of force had never been mentioned at Mecca, but the vexations, contempt, and ill-usage of years had borne bitter fruit, and at Medina was received the first revelation commanding the propagation of Islam by the sword. At first desultory attacks were made upon caravans; then followed the engagement of Bedr, where three hundred believers defeated a thousand of the Koreish, and the battle of Ohod, which ended with the wounding of Mohammed and the total rout of the Moslem army. The blockade of Medina, undertaken three years later by the chiefs of Mecca, ended disastrously for them, as the fiery Arab could not be brought to endure the restraint and inactivity incident to the protracted operations of a siege. Next came the expulsion of the disaffected Jews from the city, a measure not unattended by acts of injustice and sanguinary violence, but imperatively demanded by the requirements of political necessity. The power and prestige of Mohammed now grew apace; tribe after tribe joined his standard; distant princes sent him costly gifts and voluntarily tendered their allegiance; and in the year 630—the eighth of the Hegira—he prepared for the invasion of the sacred territory and the conquest of Mecca. Only a short time before, guarded by two faithful companions, he had fled from the Holy City with a reward of a hundred camels and forty ounces of gold upon his head; now he returned in royal state, at the head of ten thousand warriors, most of whom would have gladly laid down their lives at his command, and all of whom acknowledged him to be the Apostle of God. Before this imposing array, inspired with the fervor of religious enthusiasm, resistance was hopeless. The people fled to their houses and to the sanctuary of the temple, and the invading army occupied the city. The rights and property of the citizens were respected; there was no massacre and no pillage; no violence was offered, except to the images of the Kaaba, which were shattered to pieces without delay or opposition, for the idolaters viewed with but little emotion the destruction of the tutelary deities of many generations, whose inability to protect their worshippers had been so signally demonstrated. With a magnanimity unequalled in the annals of war, a general amnesty was proclaimed, and but four persons, whose offences were considered unpardonable, suffered the penalty of death. When the various ceremonies consecrated by the usage of centuries and destined henceforth to form an integral part of the Moslem ritual had been accomplished, and the Pagan altars in the vicinity of Mecca had been swept away, Mohammed set forth to subdue the remaining tribes that disputed his authority. A single battle sufficed; Tayif, the sole important stronghold that still held out, voluntarily submitted after an unsuccessful siege; and the supremacy of the Prophet was henceforth acknowledged over the Arabian Peninsula. Three months after the subjugation of Mecca, Mohammed, who already seemed to have had a presentiment of his approaching end, accompanied by an immense multitude, performed the pilgrimage which his teachings enjoined as an indispensable duty upon all his followers. Leaving Mecca for the last time, he slowly retraced his steps to the home of his adoption, whose people, more generous than his kinsmen, had received and protected him when a persecuted fugitive, whose factions he had reconciled, who were proud of his renown, and who, despite his kindness and the natural urbanity of his manners, never failed to approach his presence with all the reverential awe due to the possessor of divine favor and supernatural powers. His constitution, though originally fortified by abstinence and a simple diet, had for years given evidence of debility and decay, for his health had been seriously impaired by poison administered by a Jewish captive, whom his magnanimous spirit refused to punish; and, after a short illness, he expired in the arms of his favorite wife, Ayesha, upon the eighth of June, 632.

There have been few great actors upon the stage of the world the events of whose lives have been so carefully preserved as those of Mohammed, although no native contemporaneous writer has recorded his history. And yet there is no man whose talents raised him to extraordinary eminence whose deeds and whose character are so unfamiliar to Christian readers as his. Few know him but as a successful impostor. Many believe him to have been an idolater. Almost all attribute to him indulgence in the most degrading of vices,—cruelty, avarice, licentiousness. Even Christian viceroys who have lived long in Mohammedan countries know nothing of the doctrines and the career of one of the most renowned of reformers and legislators. His personal appearance, his occupations, his tastes, his weaknesses even—a strong proof of the honesty and credibility of the Mussulman narrators—have been related by the latter with scrupulous minuteness. His sayings and the opinions attributed to him, embodied in the Sunnah, are considered by devout Moslems as second only in sanctity to the verses of the Koran, and have given rise to the amazing number of six hundred thousand traditions, which laborious commentators have seen proper, upon doubtful evidence, to reduce to four thousand that may be relied upon as genuine. The study of the Koran, however, affords a better insight into the character of the Prophet than the uncertain and suspicious testimony of the Sunnah. It is the mirror in which are reflected the sincere convictions, the lofty aims, the political experiments, the domestic troubles, the hopes and apprehensions which, through many trials and perplexities, influenced the mind and directed the movements of the author in his career, from the position of a simple citizen of Mecca to the exalted dignity of sole ruler of Arabia. The estimate of Mohammed in the Sunnah, which has been transmitted by his early associates, who knew him well and daily observed his conduct in the time of his obscurity, is nevertheless entitled to far more credit than any opinion that may have been formed without the assistance of tradition by the most capable scholar after the lapse of even a single century. But unfortunately, in many instances, their accounts have been so corrupted by the fabulous embellishments of subsequent commentators as to detract much from their undoubted historical value.

The most conspicuous trait of Mohammed was his absolute inflexibility of purpose. From the hour when he first communicated to Khadijah his belief in his mission, through the long and weary years of mockery, persecution, conspiracy, and exile, during the even more trying period of prosperity and empire, up to the sad final scene in the house of Ayesha, he persevered unflinchingly in the plan which he had proposed for his guidance, and which had for its end the abolition of idolatry, the improvement of his countrymen, and the establishment of the sublime and philosophical dogma of the unity of God. The only rational explanation that can be given of this remarkable conduct in the midst of difficulties and perils which would have shaken the constancy of a mortal of ordinary mould lies in his evident sincerity. The most convincing evidence of his honesty of purpose, his self-confidence, and his earnest devotion, is furnished by the rank and character of his first disciples, and the reverence with which his teachings were received. The early proselytes of all other religions of which history makes mention were ignorant and uneducated, destitute of worldly possessions, without pride of ancestry or title to public consideration. Their ungrammatical harangues were often heard with derision; their credulity excited the contempt of the philosopher and of the hostile priesthood alike. It was even made a subject of reproach to the first Christians — an accusation, however, never conclusively proved—that their numbers were largely recruited from the criminals, the idlers, and the beggars of the Empire. The origin of modern sects has invariably been obscure, and their proselytes of humble rank and servile occupation. Not so, however, with the early followers of Mohammed. They were members of the proud and exclusive aristocracy of Arabia. Their lineage could be traced, in an unbroken line, for more than six hundred years. Their hereditary office of custodians of the shrine venerated by every tribe of the Peninsula gave them immense prestige among their countrymen. Their interest in the preservation of the national worship would naturally prejudice them against innovations which must inevitably diminish their power and curtail their emoluments. Their wealth was not inferior to their illustrious descent and their political and religious influence. Some of them were included among the most opulent citizens of Mecca. The Jewish apostates of Medina possessed the proverbial thrift and intelligence of their race. In that Hebrew colony none stood higher in public estimation than they. The success of Islam demonstrated beyond dispute the superiority of its original proselytes in the arts of statesmanship no less than in the science of war. Great talents were required to encounter successfully the exigencies which attended its institution, and which afterwards repeatedly menaced its permanence. The high character of such disciples is a positive indication of the purity of their motives and the sincerity of their belief. Men are not liable to be readily imposed upon by claims to divine inspiration asserted by their intimate associates. Distance and mystery are far more propitious to the success of a religious teacher than the familiarity which results from close acquaintance and diurnal scrutiny. It is a common error to attribute the spread of Mohammedanism entirely to the agency of force. Military success was undoubtedly a powerful factor in the accomplishment of its destiny. The sword was peculiarly esteemed in Arabia. The steel of which it was composed was, in a country where no iron was produced, the most valuable of metals. The prodigious nomenclature by which that weapon was distinguished was an indication of its national importance, and of the potency of its effects entertained by those by whom it was wielded. It represented the martial spirit of the Arab,—the ruling incentive of his life, the inspiration of his predatory exploits, the glory of a long succession of cherished traditions. A mystic significance attached to it, which, in time, assumed a religious character, and rendered its employment, according to popular belief, acceptable to the omnipotent and invisible Deity of Arabia. These ideas descended to the Moslems, and promoted, in no small degree, their energy and their enthusiasm. But force alone could never have enabled a tumultuous horde of barbarians, unaccustomed to concerted action and impatient of the restraints of military discipline, to overwhelm three great empires in less than a century. The policy of Islam was at first more conciliatory than menacing. It preferred to inculcate its principles by argument rather than to provoke opposition by invective. It disclaimed the invention of new dogmas, but labored to reconcile its tenets with those of its venerated predecessors. It discouraged proselytism by violence. Whatever it could not abolish or modify, it adopted; whatever it could not appropriate, it ruthlessly destroyed. National decrepitude; the universal decay of religious belief; the dexterous adaptation of alleged prophecy; the hopeless condition of the devout, terrified by the fierce animosity of contending sects; the impossibility of ascertaining the correctness of the Gospel amidst the confusion of doctrines and the multiplicity of versions; the political disorders resulting from barbarian ascendency; the abrogation of the offensive distinctions of caste; the mysterious fascination which attends the unknown; the prospect of wealth, renown, and empire held out to aspiring genius; the guaranty of independence of thought and immunity from persecution—grouped under the banner of Mohammed the disorganized and exhausted nations of the mediæval world. The tenor of his life until the first revelation was that of a man of unimpeachable morality. Already in his youth he had been distinguished by the significant appellation of The Faithful. His marital relations until after the death of Khadijah were without reproach; a fact conceded by his most implacable enemies. A profound knowledge of human nature, an appreciation of the spiritual requirements of his countrymen—upon whose minds the doctrines of Zoroaster and of Christ had made no permanent impression—enabled him to fabricate a system demonstrated by experience to be admirably fitted to the taste, the genius, and the superstition of the Oriental. Without a supreme conviction of the genuineness of his mission he could never have impressed his teachings upon the minds of the satirical and incredulous Arabs, or have secured proselytes among his kindred, to whom his daily intercourse would have soon revealed sentiments and conduct wholly inconsistent with his pretensions as a medium of divine authority. And yet, with all the sincerity of his convictions, he thoroughly distrusted himself. He repeatedly affirmed that he was but a man, a preacher, a reformer, whose mission was the regeneration and the happiness of mankind. In spite of his realistic descriptions of heaven and hell, he declared that he was ignorant of what was in store for the soul after death. The spirit which consolidated a hundred vagrant tribes distracted by the feuds of centuries, deaf to offers of compromise and peace, so jealous of every infringement of their personal liberty that they resented even the benignant and patriarchal rule of their chieftains, into a powerful empire; which noted the glaring absurdities of contemporaneous creeds, and offered in their stead an idea of the Deity so simple, and yet so comprehensive, that no mind, however bigoted, could conscientiously reject it; which moulded into an harmonious system the jarring interests of antagonistic races, and, by its maxims of toleration, conciliated those sectaries who denied the authenticity of its principles, and refused compliance with its ceremonial; which, in consonance with ideas of policy far in advance of the time, united the functions of ruler and priest without apparently giving undue prominence to either; which founded a religion that has endured for nearly thirteen centuries, and has claimed the devoted allegiance of a thousand million men, can hardly with propriety be said to have been created by the irrational and selfish impulses of insanity or imposture. Rather may these results be designated the operations of a master-mind actuated by a lofty ambition; a mind capable of solving the most perplexing questions of statecraft, and endowed with a degree of political wisdom not often exhibited by even those few whom the voice of history has invested with the proud title of artificers of nations.

Much has been written and spoken by persons having important material interests to subserve, possessing limited knowledge of the subject, and with little inclination to use even that knowledge with impartiality, concerning the physical weakness which, at irregular intervals, affected the Prophet. It has already been alluded to as a form of muscular hysteria, an affection peculiar to delicate, nervous organizations, whose attacks are generally evoked by sudden and intense cerebral excitement, and a physiological phenomenon belonging to the same class as somnambulism and catalepsy. It is but temporary in its effects; and while its symptoms are not dissimilar to those of the "falling sickness" of the Romans, the patient does not lose consciousness, and neither the origin nor the continuance of the disease implies even a temporary impairment of the mental faculties. In view of the thorough investigations of medical scholars, the generally received opinion, fostered by ignorance and religious prejudice, may be pronounced erroneous; even if the efforts of enlightened historical criticism had not already established beyond contradiction that to the Byzantines, who enjoyed a world-wide reputation for accomplished mendacity, is to be attributed the popular fable of the epilepsy of Mohammed.

In personal appearance, Mohammed did not differ from his countrymen of gentle blood. His head was large, his chest well developed, his limbs slender but sinewy, and his whole frame capable of the exertion of enormous strength. A heavy beard reached halfway to his girdle, and his coal-black locks, slightly curling, fell down upon his shoulders. He had the purely Semitic cast of features; the dark eyes gleaming with half-hidden fire, the thin aquiline nose, the brown complexion, and teeth of dazzling whiteness. While his expressive physiognomy indicated the possession of a high order of mental power, the sensual, as is often the case with men of extraordinary genius, was visible to an abnormal degree side by side with the intellectual. His gait was rapid and his movements energetic; his manners quiet, but pleasing; his address affable; while his commanding presence, and his proficiency in all the winning but superficial arts of the courtier, heightened by his calm and impressive demeanor, displayed to advantage the graces and charms of his eloquence. Though habitually grave and taciturn, he was easy of access to the vilest outcast; and it was said of him that he always left his hand in that of an acquaintance until the latter had withdrawn his own. His liberality was boundless, and often subjected his household to serious inconvenience; his gentle disposition is shown by his fondness for children, and his humanity by the repeated injunctions of the Koran relating to the treatment of animals. The degrading passion of avarice had no part in his nature; with immense treasures at his command, his establishment was inferior to those of his followers, and the greater part of his income he bestowed upon the poor. His tastes were always simple and unpretending; and even after he had been raised to sovereign power he retained the frugal habits of patriarchal life; his house was but a hut of sun-dried bricks and palm branches, to which a leathern curtain served as a door. So humble was he in everything that did not concern the dignity of his prophetic office, that he even mended his own sandals, cared for his goats and camels, and at times aided his wives in the performance of their domestic duties. Ever constant in friendship, he early secured, and preserved until death, the attachment of those who were associated with him, whether equals or inferiors, both of whom he treated with the utmost consideration. Such was his self-command and perfect control of his passions that he never struck an enemy save in the heat of battle, scolded a servant, or punished a slave. So far from assuming supernatural powers, he absolutely disclaimed their possession, and no public teacher has ever displayed less self-assurance and dogmatism. As a ruler and a politician, his measures were taken with tact and prudence; as a commander, he displayed in the field considerable military capacity; and it is undisputed that flagrant disobedience of his orders was the cause of his early reverses. He had the strictest ideas of the responsibilities that pertain to the administration of justice; the poorest suitor, however trifling his cause, never failed of a hearing; and he threatened with the severest penalties those who refused the settlement of their pecuniary obligations. While inculcating the crowning merit of good works, he recommended their concealment, and resolutely discountenanced all pharisaical display of pious affectation or pretended virtue. He was slow to resent an injury and quick to pardon an offender,—a signal mark of cowardice in the opinion of the Arab; timely submission and an appeal to his generosity rarely failed to disarm his short-lived hostility; and those who began by being his most implacable enemies ended by becoming his loyal and devoted champions. His magnanimity and the profound knowledge of the human heart which stamped him as a leader of men were evidenced by his noble conduct and princely liberality to the Koreish after the conquest of Mecca. In a word, the brighter side of the character of Mohammed needs no higher eulogy than is revealed by the definition which he has left us of charity, a virtue which he never ceased to practise: "Every good act is charity; your smiling in your brother's face, your putting a wanderer in the right way, your giving water to the thirsty, your exhortation to another to do right, is charity. A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he hath done in this world to his fellow-men. When he dies, people will inquire, 'What property hath he left behind him?' But the angels will ask, 'What good deeds hath he sent before him?'"

With all the greatness of Mohammed there was mingled not a little of the frailty incident to human nature,—a considerable portion of which, however, is to be credited to his want of education and to the superstitious prejudices of the age in which he lived. He abhorred darkness, and feared to be left alone without a light; he cried like a child under the slightest physical suffering; he was an implicit believer in the virtues of even numbers, and lived in constant apprehension of sorcery; while the evil-eye was to him, as to the most ignorant of his countrymen, a calamitous and dreaded reality. His conduct was frequently regulated by dreams and omens; some of the latter being not less puerile than those evoked by the arts of divination which he so resolutely condemned. He was guilty of petty affectations and exhibitions of weakness scarcely to be expected in one of his genius and position; he dyed his hair and stained his hands with henna, and displayed an amusing self-consciousness and vanity when in the presence of any of the female sex. He was inordinately jealous, and to this failing, for which history has admitted that at times he had sufficient cause, is to be attributed the seraglio, the veil, the escort of eunuchs, and the seclusion of women. His polygamous connections, which have elicited the censure of European casuists and theologians, were, in the main, measures adopted for political effect; for by these matrimonial alliances he cemented his influence and extended his power. While it would be vain to deny his amorous susceptibilities,—for we have his own testimony that of all things he loved women and perfumes,—it must be remembered that he controlled his passions until after middle life; and it is certainly less worthy of remark that he should have permitted himself the indulgence of a harem, than that, with his opportunities, he did not abandon himself to unbridled and vicious indulgence. The moral aspect of polygamy, moreover, seems to vary with the locality, and to be after all only a question of latitude. In the scorching heat of the torrid zone, which causes no appreciable deterioration in man's virility and endurance, woman matures when but a child in years, and is old and wrinkled long before her partner has reached the prime of life. Again, as is well known, the passions of Orientals are far stronger than those of Western nations, bearing to each other a ratio approximating to that of the warm-blooded mammalia to the sluggish reptilia, the voluptuous temperament of the Arabs is repeatedly mentioned by classic writers, and under the tropics the imperious demands of nature may not be disdained or neglected save in the cavern of the starving and emaciated anchorite. The civil institutions of the East have from time immemorial legalized the custom of polygamous marriage, and the words monogamist and Oriental are antithetical, and imply a contradiction in terms. Though distinguished ethnologists maintain with considerable acumen that polyandry is one of the first phases of social existence, their inferences are for the most part merely speculative; for history seldom, if ever, has recorded such alliances, and this apparently anomalous condition of family life is now found only in Thibet and Hindustan. The sacred books of the dominant religions of the world, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan, all of which are of Asiatic origin, either openly sanction polygamy or sedulously refrain from denouncing it. Every one knows that it is universal in China and India; the Zendavesta recognizes it; the student of history and legend need not be reminded of its prevalence among the Children of Israel; and the law of Islam permits its practice under certain wise and equitable restrictions. The Bible, from beginning to end, has not a single word to offer in condemnation of it; indeed, in the days of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, its utility in the lands where it prevailed appears to have been unquestioned. Although our ideas of social and domestic happiness do not tolerate this custom, which the rigor of our climate renders unnecessary and, in a measure, revolting; still, we should not attempt to measure by our arbitrary standard of propriety the habits of nations formed under far different circumstances, and satisfied with institutions consecrated by the experience of a hundred and fifty generations; nor can we, with justice, subject to our rigid canons of theological and political ethics the sentiments and actions of an illiterate man, bred among semi-barbarians, and who died nearly thirteen hundred years ago. While Mohammed shared with his countrymen all their cynical distrust of the feminine character, he is the only lawgiver claiming divine inspiration who has ever made any effort to improve the condition of women by restricting polygamy, and by the imposition of regulations which admit of no evasion without a forfeiture of legal rights. The beneficial effects of these ordinances in placing restraints upon divorce, in securing to widows immunity from destitution, and in preventing female infanticide, contribute of themselves no inconsiderable addition to the prestige of his name. Far more serious than superstitious weakness, the foibles of vanity, or predilection for women, are other accusations which have been brought against the Prophet. The employment of bravos and the assassination of prisoners, which, if not ordered, are said to have been at least connived at and rewarded by him, are ineffaceable stains upon his character; and it must be confessed that the evidence tending to establish the commission of these sanguinary deeds is but too well founded. They only indicate, however, that, while Mohammed was far in advance of his age, the passion for blood, esteemed the cardinal virtue of an Arab, had not been eradicated from his breast after a life devoted to prayer, alms-giving, and benevolence. The invocation of divine authority in the Koran to justify deeds of which even the lax morality of the age disapproved, while the exigencies of the occasion might have to some extent excused them, is also, under any circumstances, extremely discreditable. The glory of Mohammed consists in the fact that he fully realized the moral and political necessities of his people, and opened for them a career of unprecedented brilliancy; that his efforts for their substantial improvement, reacting, in turn, upon other nations utterly foreign to the Arab blood and language, will be felt to the end of time; that he abolished many cruel and degrading customs; that he elevated and dignified the character of all who received his teachings, and left devout worshippers of a single God those whom he had found polytheists and idolaters.

The Koran is believed by Mussulmans to have been delivered by the Almighty, through the angel Gabriel, to Mohammed, who communicated it orally to his companions as it was revealed, whence is derived its name, "Recitation." Having thus a divine origin, it is considered sacrilegious by the Moslem Pharisees to question the authenticity or propriety of any of its statements, or to criticise its manifold contradictions, repetitions, and absurdities. As knowledge of writing was at that time a rare accomplishment in Arabia,—it being asserted by many scholars that Mohammed himself never acquired it,—only scattered portions of the revelation were inscribed upon such materials as fragments of leather, stones, palm-leaves, and the shoulder-blades of sheep, and the remaining verses and Suras, as they fell from the lips of the Prophet, were impressed upon the marvellously retentive memories of his auditors. In the course of events many of the latter were killed in battle, and the Khalif Abu-Bekr, fearing the loss of the sacred texts, took measures to collect and preserve them in a permanent form. When Othman was raised to the Khalifate, many different readings had already arisen from this manuscript; and innumerable editions, each claiming superiority and producing endless controversy and scandal, were distributed throughout his dominions. To secure uniformity, he caused copies of the first edition to be made, and all others not agreeing with the latter were destroyed; so that the work as published under the auspices of Othman is the Koran as we possess it, the spiritual guide of all true Moslems. It is not voluminous, containing only a little more than half as much matter as the New Testament, and is composed of one hundred and fourteen Suras, or chapters, grouped together apparently without any attention to rational connection or chronological order, and wherein the same sentiments are expressed and the same legends are repeated time and again. An attentive perusal of a translation of this book is an arduous task, and even in the original it is an undertaking well calculated to exhaust the patience and application of any one but a Mussulman theologian or saint. The compiler began with the longest chapters and ended with the shortest ones, the reverse order in which they were revealed, which suggests the hypothesis that the Koran may have been at first written in some language other than Arabic, and in which the characters were read from left to right. It is also suspected, upon plausible grounds, that the sacred book has suffered interpolations and omissions made in the interest of the successful faction to which Othman belonged; a theory which has gained credence from the well-known corruption of the Scriptures by the Jews. Be this as it may, no means of comparison existing, as in the case of the different versions of the Bible, the conclusions of the critic must necessarily be drawn from the internal evidence afforded by the text itself; a mode of examination at best but unreliable and unsatisfactory. Moslems love to cite the Koran as the one miracle of Mohammed, on account of its purity of language and perfection of style; leaving out of consideration its chaotic condition, its anachronisms, and the desultory, monotonous, and disconnected rhapsodies with which it abounds. Having no diacritical points to indicate the vowels, its meaning is often ambiguous, and seven different readings exist, all of which are admitted by theologians to be correct. Though written in the dialect of Mecca, the most polished of the Arabic tongue, it contains, nevertheless, many grammatical errors;

probably traceable to the illiterate persons from whose recollection was obtained much of the first compilation, and whose words, taken down verbatim, would obviously require correction, which the scribe naturally hesitated to make through fear of sacrilege. In view of the suspicion not unjustly attaching to the motives of those who revised it, and which, to a certain extent, affects its authenticity as a whole, it is scarcely proper to subject the volume to searching and invidious criticism. Nor is it creditable to attribute to the teachings of Mohammed doctrines adopted by subsequent Moslem theologians which he would probably have been the first to condemn. The bulk of the Koran is composed of Jewish and Christian legends; rules for the ceremonial of Islam; excuses for the conduct of the Prophet when the indignation and suspicious temper of his followers threatened his ascendency; the foundation of a code of law, and a large number of moral precepts breathing a spirit of enlightened piety, impartial justice, and self-abnegation, unsurpassed by any collection of maxims ever offered for the guidance of mankind. The popular anthropomorphic idea of the Deity is rejected, all His physical attributes being now regarded as figurative; triads are classed with idols as manifestations of polytheism; and the exalted conception of God without equal or rival is perpetually impressed upon the mind of the reader in phrases glowing with the fire of religious zeal and impassioned eloquence. The poetic talent of the untutored Arab appears in all its wonderful perfection in the Koran, and yet Mohammed did not acknowledge his possession of this faculty, and persistently discouraged its exercise as a reminiscence of Paganism. Throughout the entire volume no assumption is made of divine powers by the Prophet; the ability to work miracles is especially repudiated by him as unnecessary for religious conviction, and is mentioned as an unavailing and unprofitable accomplishment of his inspired predecessors. The prevalent idea that a blind fatalism is inculcated in the pages of the Koran is a fallacy. The entire substance of its teachings is contrary to this doctrine, and would be worthless if belief in it were enjoined; passages constantly occur admitting the exercise of the utmost freedom of will, and thoroughly inconsistent with any theory depending upon the foreordained destiny of man. The fact is that the misapprehension of the meaning of Islam—absolute resignation to the will of God—is responsible for this perverted principle, which, like the crescent now universally adopted as a Moslem religious symbol, is an invention of the Turks, and was absolutely unknown as such to the early followers of Mohammed.

To the Kaaba, whose deities had received the pious homage of so many centuries, an additional importance was communicated by its adoption as the central point of Mussulman worship. In time it became invested with a mystical character resembling the personification of a female principle of faith, which, while anomalous in the practice of Islam, is so familiar to the constitution of almost all religions. A black covering representing a veil, and renewed each year with impressive ceremonies, screened the sacred building from the public gaze. A guard of eunuchs, fifty in number, the dignity and importance of whose office, as custodians of the shrine, entitled them to the superstitious reverence of the devout, were in constant attendance. In these singular regulations, which suggest both the adoration of the Virgin and the restraints of the harem, can be detected an expression of the innate and irrepressible desire of mankind for a material representation of feminine divinity.

The licentious character alleged to belong to the Mohammedan paradise has provoked much unreasonable vituperation from those who are unfamiliar with the literary peculiarities and highly imaginative temperament of the people of the East. The mind of the Oriental has ever delighted to wander in the mystic realm of parable and allegory. His sacred books, from the Zendavesta to the Koran, abound with examples of this method of impressing important truths, and even the lighter productions destined to beguile his leisure are not free from it. No educated Mussulman believes, no candid and well-informed Orientalist thinks, that the famous houris, with their unfading charms, their graceful presence, their intoxicating embraces, and their peculiar physical endowments, are anything more than the shadowy personages of allegorical imagery. Allusion is made to them in terms of vague and mysterious import susceptible of various construction; and, even if we should admit the belief in their actual existence, and adopt a literal interpretation of the verses relative to this recompense of the blest, the descriptions of their attractions are not comparable in minuteness of detail and carnal suggestiveness to the voluptuous inspirations of the Song of Solomon, which no reader, however credulous, will venture to construe otherwise than as an allegory. In the romantic and highly embellished visions of the Koran, uncultivated Moslems, imbued with the imaginative credulity of the East, have been only too ready to accept metaphor and parable for absolute fact.

The other pleasures to be found in heaven are connected with what would be most precious and refreshing to the poor and thirsty dwellers in the Desert,—the domes of pearl; the dust of musk; the pebbles of hyacinth and emerald; the sumptuous banquets; the robes of satin and gold; the exhilarating but harmless draughts of generous wine; the forests of stately palms; the everlasting verdure; the luscious fruits;

the sparkling fountains; the shady gardens watered by cool and limpid streams. It was not without reason that green became the distinctive color of the returned pilgrim, a color selected by the Prophet as emblematic of the fields and groves of Paradise.

Mohammed, having derived his idea of heaven indirectly from the Chaldean accounts of the Garden of Eden, and that of the devil from the dualism of Persian mythology, borrowed the name and description of the place of torment from the Jews, who denominated hell Ge-Hinnom, literally, the "Vale of Hinnom," from a fertile and pleasant valley near Jerusalem, which, however, was rendered execrable in spite of its attractions, on account of its being the home of the relentless Moloch, upon whose altar was periodically immolated the flower of the Hebrew youth. The rabbinical division into seven stages, entered by as many gates, and each set apart for a different degree of punishment, is adopted without sensible alteration. If reference to Paradise is seldom made in the Koran, the details of the tortures of the damned are, on the other hand, remarkable for their vividness and frequency, and, conceived by the flights of an unbridled imagination, are delineated with all the earnestness of a mind convinced of their fearful reality.

The Koran, like the Zendavesta, which enjoins the tilling of the soil as an indispensable religious duty, recommends the practice of agricultural pursuits, the extension of commerce, and the foundation and development of every species of manufacturing industry. The encouragement of these occupations, by representing them as praiseworthy and agreeable to God, with a view to their general adoption by a people who had hitherto considered trade and manual labor as contemptible, was naturally a task of considerable difficulty. But expectations of pecuniary advantage, joined to the prospect of individual distinction and national glory, speedily removed this prejudice; especially in a society which contained no privileged classes, and recognized none of the artificial and depressing obligations of feudalism. In consequence of this wise recommendation, the restrictions of caste—which had never prevailed in Arabia to the extent common to the kingdoms of Asia, probably because it possessed no hierarchy and no organized system of government—were eradicated; all employments of an honorable character were placed upon an equal footing; and the merchant and the artisan each enjoyed a degree of dignity, popular esteem, and social importance proportionate to his talents and success.

Although the Koran has been made the subject of interminable commentaries, numbering forty thousand as near as can be estimated, and isolated precepts have been expanded and distorted for the purpose of forming an elaborate system of jurisprudence, it was never intended as a general text-book of law. The few maxims upon this subject which it contains were borrowed partly from the Hebrews, but chiefly from the sanguinary code of the early Arabians. Some, in addition to those above mentioned, grew out of the requirements of particular cases; the majority of them, however, relate to the domestic difficulties of the Prophet and to the regulation of the harem. Notwithstanding the latter preferably adopted the Koran as the basis of his legal decisions whenever it was practicable, it is a well-known fact that after his death the collections of the Sunnah furnished a standard of broader application, and of scarcely less authoritative character, in the settlement of the principles of Mohammedan law.

The Koran commands relief of the oppressed, protection of the defenceless, mercy to the orphan, and kindness to animals. It enjoins the strict performance of engagements, even though entered into with members of a hostile creed; in humiliating contrast with the policy of Catholic Rome, whose children were perpetually absolved from the observance of contracts concluded with infidels. It denounces awful penalties against the murderer and the suicide. In its pages the profound deference that usually attaches to aristocratic birth and distinguished station is ignored; titled insolence is not permitted to assert superiority over the unpretending worshipper, and the monarch and the beggar meet as brethren before the throne of Almighty God. The right of private judgment is repeatedly and authoritatively declared to be the privilege of every believer; the humblest Moslem may place his own interpretation on the texts of the alleged revelation; and his conception of their meaning and application is entirely independent of the edicts of priests or the suspicious decisions of synods and councils.

Abstinence from swine's flesh and from the blood of all animals is enforced through hygienic considerations arising from experience of the injurious effects of such food in tropical climates; and the requirement of personal cleanliness by frequent and regular lustration has its origin in the same vigilant solicitude for the public welfare.

A marked difference of ideas and phraseology is to be discerned in the Suras delivered at Mecca and Medina respectively; the former being more poetic, inspiring, and defiant than the latter. As Mohammed consolidated his power, the text of the Koran evinced more of the calmness and dignity of the ruler than of the fire of the enthusiast. The earnest desire to make converts of the Jews is disclosed by the appeal to a common ancestry, and by the politic incorporation of Talmudic legends into the holy book which was to replace the Bible; while the signal failure to secure this result is foreshadowed by threats of divine wrath soon to be realized by slavery, exile, and death. Though Arabia was full of infidels, and even a large proportion of the idolaters observed the rites of their religion merely as a matter of form and fashion, and were deeply infected with skepticism, it is singular that Mohammed, in his denunciations of hypocrisy and idolatry, did not utter a word in condemnation of atheistical ideas. The book, moreover, which was to be the guide of a sect whose adherents improved algebra, discovered chemical analysis, and brought agriculture to an unprecedented degree of perfection, contains no science, and only the most rudimentary notions of civil government. According to the Koran, the sun sets in a morass of black mud; water is the element whence all life is derived; and the conceptions of natural phenomena which are gravely set forth in its pages are only worthy of the vagrant fancies of children and barbarians.

Among Orientals the Koran is invariably published in Arabic, the sacred language of the Mussulmans, who are instructed in it during childhood, just as orthodox Jews are early familiarized with the Hebrew tongue. It is not known through the medium of translation in Mohammedan countries unless when the latter is interlined with the original; so that the reader, by comparing the different texts, may have an opportunity to judge of the qualifications and accuracy of the translator. Great luxury is usually exhibited in the embellishment of the sacred volume. Its leaves are blue or purple, odorous with costly perfumes, its letters of gold. Its covers are often studded with jewels. Amidst its interwoven arabesques the name of God appears, repeated thousands of times. No Mussulman handles it without every demonstration of reverence. It almost always bears upon the side an admonition not to touch it with unclean hands; an unnecessary precaution for the devout, whose respect for its contents is indeed not unreasonable, as we may perceive from a single invocation taken at random, and not conspicuous among the expressions of sublime piety to be found upon almost every page: "Architect of the heaven and the earth, thou art my support in this world and the next. Cause me to die faithful to the law. Introduce me into the assembly of the just."

Islam means substantially the Religion of Peace. From this verbal form are derived the terms Mussulman and Moslem, indicating all who are submissive to the will of God. The commonly adopted appellation Mohammedan is not countenanced by followers of the Prophet, and is of European origin. The Islamitic confession of faith is the simplest known to any creed; it merely involves the repetition of the formula, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his Apostle." By the acceptance and utterance of this phrase, any one may become a Mussulman; although the observance of the practical duties of prayer, fasting, alms-giving, and pilgrimage, urged with such eloquence in the Koran, are regarded as obligatory upon all professing that religion. Moslems pray five times daily, and before each prayer an ablution must be performed, as a token that the suppliant has cleansed his heart of every vestige of insincerity and impure desire. The Pagan Arabs, as often as they addressed their supplications to their ruling divinity, turned their faces to the rising sun, and when Mohammed instituted his form of prayer, he selected as the objective point, or Kiblah, the temple of Jerusalem, with the design of attracting the Jews; but after the conversion of the latter was seen to be impracticable, and no further reason for conciliation existed, the Kaaba was substituted; and thenceforth the holy shrine of Mecca became the Kiblah of the Moslem faith. During the month of Ramadhan—set apart because in it was communicated the first revelation—a fast is enjoined throughout the domain of Islam, and abstinence from food and drink is required from sunrise to sunset; an intolerable hardship in torrid lands, where the month often falls in summer on account of the constantly retrograding divisions of the lunar year.

The unostentatious bestowal of alms was a duty whose importance Mohammed constantly impressed upon his followers as a cardinal virtue; the Moslem is taxed to the tenth of his income for the benefit of the poor; and if his wealth has been increased through injustice or dishonesty, the penalty of a double contribution is exacted. Pilgrimage, the last of the religious obligations of Islamism, whenever possible, should be performed in person; its observance confers a life-long distinction, and its neglect implies a deplorable want of energy in the believer that may compromise his happiness hereafter.

When the pilgrim enters the sacred territory, which extends for several miles in every direction from Mecca, he lays aside his clothes, performs complete ablution, and dons the Ihram, or Garment of Holiness, which is composed of two long, seamless pieces of cotton cloth, one to be wrapped about the waist, and the other to be adjusted upon the upper part of the body so as to leave the right shoulder bare. All covering for the head is prohibited; a severe restriction under the blazing sun of the Hedjaz. He now approaches the Kaaba, kisses the Black Stone, and makes the circuit of the edifice seven times, repeating certain prayers prescribed for the occasion. Next he drinks of the waters of the holy well Zemzem, which tradition asserts burst forth spontaneously at the feet of Hagar when she and Ishmael were about to perish of thirst in the wilderness. Near at hand is the Station of Abraham, a large stone upon which the Patriarch is supposed to have stood when he built the Kaaba, whither the pilgrim must now resort and perform his devotions. Finally, he leaves the precincts of the shrine and runs seven times between Safa and Merwa, two elevations beyond the walls of the mosque; a ceremony commemorative of the despair of Hagar in her search for water to sustain the life of her suffering child before the fountains of Zemzem were miraculously opened. Upon the eighth day of the Pilgrimage, a mighty host, amounting not infrequently to the number of seventy-five thousand souls, with twenty-five thousand camels and countless other animals for sacrifice, sets out for Mount Arafat, ten miles distant, from whose summit a sermon is preached by the chief imam of the Mosque of Mecca. The sermon concluded, all hurry amidst great confusion to the Valley of Mina, where each pilgrim should cast seven pebbles at three pillars representing the devil, in commemoration of an incident in the life of Abraham. The animals, sheep and camels, are next slaughtered,—a ceremony symbolical of the sacrifice by the patriarch, whose victim, however, is stated by Arabian tradition to have been Ishmael instead of Isaac,—and the pilgrims are then at liberty to resume their ordinary garments, shave their heads, trim their beards, and pare their nails; acts considered illegal before the various rites of the Pilgrimage have been performed according to the prescribed routine.

The visit to the Prophet's tomb at Medina is not compulsory, but is indispensable to secure the honorable title of Hadj, which confers the privilege of wearing a green turban, and excites the perpetual envy of those unfortunates whose physical incapacity or limited financial circumstances will not permit a journey to the Holy Cities of Arabia.

"Show me a people's God," said Euripides, "and I will tell you that people's history." To the history of Islam is this significant remark especially appropriate. The Moslem conception of the Deity is one of unapproachable grandeur and sublimity. While placed immeasurably above His creatures, their praise and their petitions are always tendered Him without the officious intervention of a privileged caste, and wherever the hour of prayer may find the worshipper, whether in the retirement of his home, in the noisy bazaar, upon the deck of a vessel in mid-ocean, or amidst the awful stillness and solitude of the Desert.

The practical value and consequent importance of a religion consist not so much by whom or under what circumstances it is alleged to have been founded, but in what it has effected for the happiness and permanent improvement of humanity.

Through the enthusiasm inspired by its exalted ideas of Almighty power, Islam extirpated idolatry so thoroughly, that in the second generation after it was promulgated men feared even to mention the names of the false gods of their fathers. It made cannibalism detestable, and swept away human sacrifices, with which the Arabs had been familiar for a period whose commencement was long anterior to the days of Abraham. It softened the asperities of warfare; extended to the vanquished the advantages of instant liberty and prospective distinction, upon the sole condition of conversion; it protected the unfortunate captive from violence, and abolished the shocking practice of mutilation of the dead. Its hostility to the spirit of feudalism insured the protection and freedom of every degree and profession of mankind. It elevated the position of woman; repressed the unblushing licentiousness prevalent in the Age of Ignorance; formulated an equitable law of divorce, where separation had been previously a matter of caprice;

and shielded the wife from the cruelty, avarice, and injustice of the husband. It stamped out, at once and forever, the horrible crime of infanticide. It prohibited not merely the abuse of wine and other intoxicants, but even the slightest indulgence in them. It declared divination and all games of chance to be devices of Satan, whose practice would inevitably cause a forfeiture of Paradise. While countenancing slavery, it ameliorated the condition of the slave, who, under the patriarchal customs of the Orient, enjoyed the familiar intercourse and shared the paternal care of the master; declared his manumission to be the most commendable of acts and the most effective of penances; defined his rights, regulated the measure of his punishment and the amount of his ransom, and established the humane provision that, when sold, the slave-mother should never be separated from her child. It recommended as indispensable duties of the true believer the practice of humility, of resignation, of benevolence. By proclaiming the equality of all men and by the persistent inculcation of the virtues of charity and forgiveness, it gradually weakened, and ultimately abrogated, the law of blood-revenge, which the Bedouin had been accustomed to consider his most cherished privilege; a right whose violation, according to popular opinion, involved the honor of his tribe and the assertion of his manhood. It liberated property from the arbitrary impositions of a horde of petty chieftains, who levied excessive tribute to the infinite detriment of commerce, and imposed a single tax—the tenth of the increase—understood and acquiesced in by all. It punished mercilessly the abuses which arose from the unprincipled exactions of usury, and, by the enforcement of laws of unexampled rigor, guaranteed the safety of travellers in regions where successful robbery had been a mark of personal distinction, and where the outrage of private rights was still the unquestioned prerogative of every inhabitant whose arm was more powerful than that of his neighbor. Attaching the highest importance to habitual cleanliness, it commended its daily observance, and, to avoid a plausible excuse for neglect, it suggested the use of sand, as symbolical of water, in localities where the latter could not be obtained. It admitted into its ceremonial the wise and time-honored custom of circumcision; a purely sanitary regulation, whose important physiological significance every surgeon will readily comprehend. Islam is emphatically a religion of good works, and the believer is constantly reminded that upon the Day of Judgment his meritorious acts and deeds of benevolence will speak eloquently in his favor, although his lips have long been closed in the silence of the grave. No organized body of ecclesiastics, greedy of gain and notoriety and utterly unscrupulous as to the means of obtaining them, thronged its temples; for, in its original purity, it dispensed with a salaried priesthood, and all who read or expounded the Koran in public were expressly forbidden to receive for their services any remuneration whatever. The unseemly contests of sacerdotal ambition, the senseless privations of asceticism, the bloody and turbulent spirit of monastic bigotry, were, by the prudence and foresight of its founder, excluded from its system. Imposing a moderate contribution upon all those in its dominions who declined to abjure the faith of their ancestors, it, upon the other hand, refused to the ministers of other religions, its vassals, the privilege of taxing the members of their congregations without their consent. It impressed upon youth, of whatever rank or station, the obligations of polite and courteous behavior and the unremitting exercise of filial piety. It accorded to every seeker after truth the inestimable privilege of private interpretation and individual opinion,—an inherent right of man refused by Christianity until the time of Luther, who, on account of his advocacy of this innovation, was himself denounced as a Mohammedan; and in certain countries of Europe, not asserted until the seventeenth century, except in secret, and under the threatening shadows of the stake and the scaffold. Unlike other religions, it did not refuse salvation to those who rejected its dogmas. In the presence of the allurements of the seraglio, it still represented continence as the most precious jewel of a believer; but, perceiving the vices provoked by the unnatural restraints of monastic life, it prohibited celibacy, and, for two centuries after the death of the Prophet, the faquir, the santon, and the dervish were unknown. By adopting to a certain extent the primitive code of antiquity, eliminating the evil and retaining the good it contained, it appealed strongly to religious sentiment and national pride, rendered still more binding the virtues of public faith and private hospitality, and, by its repudiation of idolatry in all its forms, concentrated the mind of the devotee upon the compassion, the justice, the infinite grandeur and majesty of God.

A marked peculiarity of Islam is the absence of the female element from its ritual. Even now, in the days of its degeneracy, women have no place in the calendar of its saints; and yet we are aware that among all former, and many contemporaneous, religions the employment of priestesses was common, and female deities were favorite objects of adoration. The Virgin of the Koran—though her immaculate conception was conceded seven hundred and sixty-one years in advance of the decision of the Council of Basel—is, in all other respects, an ordinary mortal, and is far from possessing the dignity and importance of the famous Isis, that fascinating goddess who, banished from the banks of the Nile, was exalted, crowned with her starry emblems, in equal majesty and superior beauty, upon a more gorgeous throne in the imperial city of Catholic Rome.

Mohammed was not exempt from the prejudices entertained by his countrymen towards the sex. The sentimental gallantry and respectful homage tendered its members by Western nations is unknown to the suspicious and sarcastic Oriental. The Prophet declared that the majority of persons he saw in hell during his nocturnal journey were women. But if the power of woman to act directly upon the fortunes of Islam was disdained, her indirect influence in that direction was enormous and undeniable. The harems of the polygamous conquerors at once absorbed the noblest and fairest maidens of the households of the vanquished. The children of these mothers became, without exception, Moslems; and, after the lapse of a generation, the lingering traces of other beliefs disappeared, and nothing but a reconquest and a fresh immigration, or a miraculous interposition of Providence, could have restored the land, so recently subjugated, to its pristine faith.

In religion, as in politics, success is the generally recognized criterion of truth; of the multitude, few have time or inclination for the solution of abstruse theological questions; but substantial results are unmistakable, and even the most credulous are subject to the contagion of example. The successive and dazzling victories of Islam were, in the eyes of its superstitious adversaries, the most convincing argument of the divinity of its origin.

The doctrine of compulsion subsequently associated with Islam was, as already stated, not an original or essential part of its dogma. Mohammed did not advise recourse to the sword until all means of peaceable persuasion had been exhausted, and then only during the continuance of active hostilities. The moral impulse which Islam received as soon as its first victories were won was remarkable and suggestive. It was but the manifestation of the reverence for Force, a feeling which is never eradicated from human nature even in the mostly highly civilized communities. The Roman empire was founded upon this principle, of which it subsequently became the practical embodiment and representative. The successors of the Cæsars, the Khalifs, well aware of its power over the masses, retained and perpetuated its influence, and the scimetar and the Koran usurped the place and dignity of the deposed deities Mars and Hercules. And even in our day we see the evidence of the survival of this sentiment—as old as man himself—in the ceremonies relating to marriage by force among barbarous nations; in the proverbial, yet unconscious, admiration of both sexes—and especially of women—for the soldier; in the applause that greets the espada in the bull-ring; and in the homage and hero-worship accorded to the successful athlete and pugilist.

The mountain region of the Hedjaz, the rocky and barren valleys of Palestine, are insignificant in extent, destitute of natural resources, and without political importance in the eyes of the conquerors and rulers of nations. Yet within their contracted limits were promulgated the three religions which have exercised a predominant influence over the destinies of the most diverse and widely separated races of the globe. The unsocial and repellent character of the institutions of Moses which discouraged proselytism did not prevent the power of Hebrew genius from being felt in every country in which the detested sectaries of Israel established themselves. Christianity and Mohammedanism have by turns disputed the empire of the civilized world. The Khalifs, the spiritual heads of Islam, were long the exponents of intellectual culture, the masters of the fairest regions of Europe and Asia, the discerning patrons of art and letters. The most renowned of the Cæsars, the greatest of modern potentates, were alike inferior in rank and public consideration to the Supreme Pontiffs, who inherited the throne ennobled by the traditions of Roman glory, and whose dignity was confirmed by the omnipotent authority of God. No secular government, worthy of mention in history, has ever been instituted in a region so dreary and inhospitable as that from whence the most powerful and practical forms of faith that have ever enthralled humanity deduce their origin. The changes which all of the latter, in turn, have undergone, present a suggestive commentary on the perishable character of religious systems. The influence of the Babylonian captivity upon Judaism is apparent in every book of the Old Testament and in many of those of the New. We may safely conjecture that Christianity was something very different in the time of Tiberius from what it was in the time of Constantine, and we know what radical changes were made in its canons and ritual by Gregory the Great and Luther. The ancient manuscripts of the Gospels—perhaps destroyed for sinister reasons—have left no data for speculation as to their contents; but it is not unreasonable to at least surmise that the originals did not offer the glaring examples of inelegant diction and barbaric idioms that deform the modern versions. Nor has Islam escaped the fate of its predecessors, the result of the vicissitudes of time, and of the prejudices, weaknesses, and ambition of their votaries. Its distinctive peculiarity was its positive disclaimer of supernatural powers; yet the miracles attributed to Mohammed compose a considerable portion of its sacred literature, which is also oppressed and discredited by a vast mass of preposterous fables, treasured up for centuries in the voluminous body of Islamitic tradition. The simplicity of its creed would seem to effectually preclude all attempts at sectarian division; yet seventy-three sects exist, whose members lose no opportunity to persecute each other with acrimonious hostility. Mohammed execrated idolatry and the arts of the diviner, and denied the merit of works of supererogation; and now relics are suspended in the mosques; omens are sought in the Koran; intercession of saints is daily implored; the Persians worship the Imams; and the Omanites, instead of recognizing the Kaaba, render their obeisance to the Kiblah of their Sabean ancestors, the pole-star of the heavens.

In the Prophet's attempts to secure the improvement of public morals, his attention was particularly drawn to Mecca as the central point of Islam, whither the believer turns in his daily devotions, and towards which his sightless eyes are directed when his body is deposited in the tomb. But the effects of his salutary admonitions died with him; and the Meccans, relieved from restraint, again became notorious for the excesses which had formerly made the Holy City a reproach even to heathen Arabia. It is a deplorable fact, and one which unhappily affords but too much excuse for the gibes of the profane, that those seats of piety which public opinion has invested with the sacred prestige of celestial influence are the very ones whose population is the most blasphemous, vile, and degraded. The worst Mussulmans of the world are the Arabs of the Hedjaz, as the Italian populace has ever been the scoffer at papal infallibility and the relentless enemy of the Vicar of God. The three cities of the world whose inhabitants early acquired, and have since maintained, the most unenviable reputation for depravity and licentiousness are Jerusalem, Mecca, and Rome.

Unlike most theological systems to which men, in all ages, have rendered their obedient and pious homage, no mystery obscures the origin and foundation of Islam. The purity and simplicity of its principles have undergone no change. Its history has been preserved by the diligence of innumerable writers. The life and characteristics of its Prophet, even to the smallest detail, are accessible to the curiosity of every enterprising scholar.

The austere character of a faith which, at its inception, exacts a rigid compliance with the minutest formalities of its ritual, naturally becomes relaxed and modified after that system has attained to worldly importance and imperial authority; or, in the language of one of the greatest of modern writers, "a dominant religion is never ascetic." It is strange that Islam, which, in this respect, as in many others, has conformed to the general law of humanity, and now acknowledges tenets and allows practices that would have struck the subjects of Abu-Bekr and Omar with amazement, has been able to preserve in such perfection the observance of its ceremonial; especially when it had no organized sacerdotal power to sustain it. The absence of an ecclesiastical order which could dictate the policy of the throne, and humble the pride of the ermine and purple with the dust in the presence of some audacious zealot, also left untrammelled the way for scientific investigation and research, and, more than all else, contributed to dispel the darkness of mediæval times. The doctrine of toleration enunciated by Mohammed gave no encouragement to that system of repression whose activity has exhausted every means of checking the growth of philosophical knowledge, by imposing the most direful spiritual and temporal penalties upon every teacher who ventures to publicly explain its principles; and it is a matter of far deeper import to the civilization of the twentieth century, than is implied by the mere performance of an act of devotion, when the Temple of Mecca—the seat of a time-honored faith, from whose shrine emanated the spirit of learning that redeemed degraded Europe—is saluted five times every day by the reverent homage of concentric circles of believers, one hundred and fifty million in number, from Tangier to Pekin, from the borders of Siberia to the Equinoctial Line.

We may well consider with admiration the rapid progress and enduring effects of this extraordinary religion which everywhere brought order, wealth, and happiness in its train; which, in destroying the deities of the Kaaba, swept away the traditions of thirty centuries; which adopted those pagan rites that it could not abolish; which seized and retained the birthplace of Christianity; which dispersed over so wide a territory alike the theocracy of the Jews and the ritual of Rome; which drove the Magi from the blazing altars of Persia; which usurped the throne and sceptre of the Byzantine Church; which supplanted the fetichism of the African desert; which trampled upon the mysteries of Isis, Osiris, and Horus, and revealed to the wondering Egyptians the secret of the Most High God; which invaded the Councils of Catholicism, and suggested a fundamental article of its belief; which fashioned the graceful arches of our most famous cathedrals; which placed its seal upon the earth in the measurement of a degree, and inscribed its characters in living light amidst the glittering constellations of the heavens; which has left its traces in the most familiar terms of the languages of Europe; which affords daily proof of its beneficent offices in the garments that we wear, in the books that we read, in the grains of our harvests, in the fruits of our orchards, in the flowers of our gardens; and which gave rise to successive dynasties of sovereigns, whose supreme ambition seemed to be to exalt the character of their subjects, to transmit unimpaired to posterity the inestimable treasures of knowledge, and to extend and perpetuate the intellectual empire of man. These signal and unparallelled results were effected by the inflexible constancy, the lofty genius, the political sagacity, of an Arabian shepherd, deficient in the very rudiments of learning, reared among a barbarous people divided into tribes whose mutual hostility had been intensified by centuries of warfare, who had no organized system of government, who considered the mechanical and mercantile arts degrading, who recognized no law but that of force, and knew no gods but a herd of grotesque and monstrous idols. Robbery was their profession, murder their pastime. Except within the precincts of their camp, no friend, unless connected by the sacred ties of blood, was secure. They devoured the flesh of enemies slain in battle. Deceit always excepted, cruelty was their most prominent national characteristic. Their offensive arrogance, relentless enmity, and obstinate tenacity of purpose were, in a direct ratio to their ignorance and their brutalizing superstition, confirmed by the prodigies, the omens, and the legends of ages.

To undertake the radical amelioration of such political and social conditions was a task of appalling, of apparently insuperable difficulty. Its fortunate accomplishment may not indicate the active interposition of Divine authority. The glories which invest the history of Islam may be entirely derived from the valor, the virtue, the intelligence, the genius, of man. If this be conceded, the largest measure of credit is due to him who conceived its plan, promoted its impulse, and formulated the rules which insured its success. In any event, if the object of religion be the inculcation of morals, the diminution of evil, the promotion of human happiness, the expansion of the human intellect; if the performance of good works will avail in that great day when mankind shall be summoned to its final reckoning, it is neither irreverent nor unreasonable to admit that Mohammed was indeed an Apostle of God.

CHAPTER III

THE CONQUEST OF AL-MAGHREB

647–707

General Disorder following the Death of Mohammed—Regulations of Islam—Progress of the Moslem Arms—Northern Africa, the Land of the Evening—Its Fertility—Its Population—Expedition of Abdallah—Defeat of the Greeks—Invasion of Okbah—Foundation of Kairoan—March of Hassan—Ancient Carthage—Its Influence on Europe—Its Splendid Civilization—Its Maritime Power, its Colonies, its Resources—Description of the City—Its Architectural Grandeur—Its Harbors, Temples, and Public Edifices—Roman Carthage—Its Luxury and Depravity—Its Destruction by the Moslems—Wars with the Berbers—Musa appointed General—His Romantic History—His Character—He subdues Al-Maghreb—Africa incapable of Permanent Civilization.

THE dissensions excited by the fierce hordes of Arabia, whose intolerance of authority and aversion to tribute had been with difficulty controlled by the mysterious influence of Mohammed, at his death broke forth with redoubled violence, and seriously threatened, for a time, not only the integrity of the Moslem empire, but even the existence and perpetuity of the recently established faith. With the exception of a few tribes which the ties of blood or considerations of personal interest, joined to their intimate commercial relations with the inhabitants of the Holy Cities, retained in a precarious allegiance, the whole population of the Peninsula rose at once in arms. Each petty chieftain, jealous of the central power, and endowed with an extravagant opinion of his own abilities as ruler and legislator, arrogated to himself divine authority, and aspired to the title and the prerogatives of a prophet of God. The populace, half idolatrous and half infidel at heart, and which had received the injunctions of the Koran with apparent enthusiasm and inward contempt, welcomed with joy each new revelation, as affording a prospective state of war and discord so thoroughly in consonance with its predatory instincts and turbulent character.

With this condition of affairs, whose gravity might well have appalled the mind of an experienced statesman, the executive ability and diplomatic tact of the first Khalif, a man bred to mercantile pursuits, yet admirably fitted by nature for the arduous duties of his exalted position, were found fully competent to deal. The insurgent armies were annihilated; the false prophets killed, driven into exile, or compelled to renounce their claims; the rebellious tribes were decimated, and their property seized as the legal spoils of war. With keen insight into the character of his countrymen, Abu-Bekr employed their fiery and indomitable spirit in the extension of Islam and the settlement and consolidation of its hitherto ill-defined and uncertain jurisdiction. The policy partially developed under his wise management was finally established and perfected by the iron will and martial genius of Omar. The latter realized thoroughly the paramount importance of preserving unimpaired the unity and prestige of his nation, whose victories, in brilliancy and political effect, had already surpassed those of any preceding conqueror, and bade fair to make the dominion of Islam coextensive with the world. In pursuance of this design, the spoils of conquest, the tribute of subjugated nations, the enormous rental of the plains of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia, the rich harvests of the Valley of the Nile, the magnificent gifts of distant sovereigns—hoping to escape a visitation from the swarthy horsemen of the Desert—were all placed in a common fund, from which was pensioned every individual belonging to the Arab race, in regular gradation, the stipend increasing with years, dignity, and value of military service. No one was too insignificant to have his name inscribed upon the official registers at Medina; and even slaves, women, and newly-born infants were, as well as the most renowned warriors, regularly paid their stated allowance. In the various countries reduced by the prowess of the Moslems, the lands, though confiscated to the uses of the state, remained by special provision inalienable, and, while forming a part of the public domain, could not be acquired by those who had conquered them, and continued to be occupied and tilled by their former proprietors. By these regulations, also, the legal residence of the Arab was established and made perpetual in the Peninsula. Everywhere else, no matter what his rank or employment, he was but a sojourner, liable at any moment, without warning, to be summoned to battle with the infidel; and even viceroys of the Khalif could not purchase a foot of ground in the cities which they ruled with all but absolute power. While in the case of female captives, the most unbounded license was permitted and encouraged, the believer was particularly enjoined to select for his wives the daughters of some Arab clan; and his children, without exception, were early taught to assert their assumed superiority of birth, and to look down upon all foreigners, however illustrious they might be by descent, wealth, military distinction, or literary attainments.

The comprehensive and exacting laws of Omar, which arbitrarily determined questions of legislation and finance, the marshalling of armies, the adjustment of territorial disputes, the arrangement of the household, and the offices of religion, laid the foundation for the future greatness of Islam. By his edict the date of the Hegira was fixed. His inflexible sense of justice inflicted the humiliating punishment of the lash, prescribed by law for drunkenness, upon beggar and noble alike. The Code which bears his name is remarkable, even in an age of fanaticism, for the severe restrictions it imposed on the personal liberty of Jews and Christians, the only sectaries to whom Moslem clemency permitted the practice of their rites and customs.

The assassination of Omar in the prime of manhood, and before his great designs had been fully matured, was the signal for feuds, conspiracies, and every form of domestic convulsion, fomented by tribal jealousy, ancient prejudice, and disappointed ambition; disturbances which the weak and vacillating spirit of his successor was unable to repress. Yet, despite the disadvantages arising from the intellectual impotence of Othman, the constitution of the Mussulman theocracy possessed sufficient vitality to retard dissolution for a considerable time. The glorious traditions of a decade of uninterrupted victory were not easily forgotten. The trophies wrested from the despised and hated foe were displayed in every city and village; his banners drooped in the courts of every mosque; the harem, the street, the bazaar, swarmed with captives from the most distant climes; while the annual distribution from the public treasury evidenced at once the wealth and weakness of the infidel and the paternal generosity of the conqueror. The Persian monarchy which had successfully withstood the attacks of consul, dictator, and emperor, supported by the discipline and inexhaustible resources of Roman power, had fallen, after two great battles, before the impetuous valor of the Moslem hosts. Palestine, with its hallowed associations, its memories of all that is most sacred in the annals of Christianity, its scenes of divine miracle and mystery, of privation, suffering, and triumphant glory, was in the hands of the Mussulman, whose sacrilegious footsteps daily defiled the precincts of Gethsemane and Golgotha, and whose call to prayer arose from a magnificent shrine erected upon the site of the ruined temple of Solomon. The Greek Emperor, after a reign of extraordinary vicissitudes which had, in some degree, retrieved the vanished prestige of the Roman arms deprived in rapid succession of the choicest realms of his empire, was now virtually a prisoner, protected only by the Bosphorus and the impregnable walls of his capital. Egypt, the depository of traditions of incalculable antiquity, had submitted, after a brief and determined struggle, to the common fate of nations, and the banners of Islam floated in triumph from the towers of Alexandria and Memphis. It was with a feeling of awe and wonder that the fierce, untutored Arab gazed upon the monuments of this strange and, to him, enchanted land. Before him were the Pyramids, rising in massive grandeur upon the borders of the Desert; the stupendous temples; the mural paintings, whose brilliant coloring was unimpaired after the lapse of fifty centuries; the groups of ponderous sphinxes, imposing even in their mutilation; the speaking statues, which, facing the East, with the first ray of light saluted the coming day; the obelisks, sculptured upon shaft and pedestal with the eternal records of long extinguished dynasties; the vast subterranean tombs, whose every sarcophagus was a gigantic monolith; and the effigies of the old Egyptian kings, personifications of dignity and power, holding in their hands the symbols of time and eternity, or grasping, in lieu of the sceptre, that emblematic staff, which, more potent than the wand of the mightiest magician, has controlled the destinies of millions of men, and which became in turn the wand of the Grecian hierophant in the mysteries of Eleusis, the lituus of the Roman augur, and the crosier of the Catholic archbishop. At his feet rolled the turbid flood of the mysterious river, to whose periodical inundation was due the civilization of that venerable country. The anticipation of this phenomenon had necessitated the study of astronomy; its overflow had developed a perfect system of irrigation, and a complicated body of laws, which regulated the distribution of its fertilizing waters; its subsidence had required a thorough acquaintance with the rules of geometry and mensuration; and the noxious vapors arising from its steaming deposits demanded the speedy disinfection and embalming of all putrescent animal matter, a precaution which was rigidly enforced by established custom and the inexorable precepts of religion. The initiations of the priesthood, the jealously treasured maxims of its occult knowledge, the attributes of its innumerable deities, all bore an intimate relation to the waters of the Nile, whose recurring and invariable changes also indicated the seasons of the Egyptian year, which were measured by the harvests. The influence produced by the sight of these marvels upon the destiny of the simple Arab, whose horizon had hitherto been defined by the shifting sands and quivering vapors of the Desert, by whom the grandeur and symmetry of architectural design were undreamt of, and whose ideas of decoration were limited to the barbaric tracery of an earthen jar or the coarse patterns of the primitive loom, was incalculable. As every civilization is but an adaptation to new conditions of elements more or less perceptible in those which have preceded it, so it was with that of the Arabs. Their architecture, mainly indebted for its beauty to the selection of designs from the vegetable world and the skilful combination of geometrical forms, may in this respect justly lay claim to originality. Nevertheless, in the groundwork of its finest edifices, the practised eye can easily detect the foreign influence by which the efforts of its artisans have been inspired; and the characteristics of Persian, Egyptian, Carthaginian, and Byzantine are prominent in the solid walls, the graceful curves, and the sparkling mosaics of the builders' masterpieces which adorn the widely-separated provinces of the Mohammedan empire.

It was during the reign of Othman that the attention of the Moslems was first seriously directed to the northern coast of Africa, a region which, extending from the Nile to the Atlantic, comprised a territory of one thousand miles in length by five hundred in breadth in its largest diameter. In its approaches, which were made over burning sands, it exhibited the familiar phenomena of the Desert. The greater portion of its vast area was susceptible of cultivation, and contiguous plantations and gardens marked, with an unbroken line of verdure, the possessions of the once magnificent and still important cities which in the days of her glory acknowledged the authority and claimed the protection of the imperial metropolis of Carthage. Here the most abundant harvests, the most luscious fruits, rewarded, with but trifling exertion, the industry of the husbandman. Luxuriant pastures, through which meandered sparkling brooks fed by perennial springs, sustained large numbers of cattle and sheep. The date flourished in such variety that it was only by its shape and stone that its species could be determined. The soil was favorable to the olive, and oil formed an important article of export. It was indeed a land of promise, renowned in history, celebrated in myth and legend; the Ophir of Holy Writ; the scene of the sufferings of Marius, Regulus, and Cato; where originated many of the most charming fictions of classic mythology; the home of Danaus, Antæus, and Atlas; for centuries the abode of Tyrian civilization; the seat successively of Punic splendor, Roman luxury, Vandal license, and Christian faith. In its capital Hamilcar had prepared for the descent upon Sicily which had secured the mastery of the Mediterranean, and Hannibal had planned the campaign which humbled the pride of the Eternal City; the land which had received in its bosom refugees from Palestine and Arabia, the founders and supporters of a new and glorious empire; the see of St. Augustine; the enchanted Garden, where dwelt the beautiful daughters of Erebus and Night; where the gigantic portal marked by the two famous columns pointed out to the Phœnician mariner the way to the Cassiterides—

"Abyla atque Calpe."

Carthaginian enterprise for ages bartered its manufactures for the tin of Britain and the luxuries of Syria; under the Romans, for four centuries, its agricultural products maintained in profligate idleness the degenerate inhabitants of Italy.

The further extremity of this region, which the poetic nomenclature of the Oriental had designated by the name of Al-Maghreb, "The Land of the Evening," was the wealthier and more productive; but its storm-swept coast had subordinated its trade to the superior commercial advantages of the eastern half, now Tunis and Tripoli, which was known as Ifrikiyah. A prefect appointed by the court of Constantinople administered the government of these colonies, in the name of the Emperor, but his jurisdiction was confined to a narrow belt of territory, beyond which roamed at will bands of ferocious and hardy barbarians, some of whom had no settled habitation; while a considerable number dwelt in the slopes and defiles of the Atlas Mountains, eking out a miserable subsistence by a superficial cultivation of the soil and a precarious traffic with their scarcely less civilized neighbors. The population of this province was, owing to repeated immigration and invasion, and the consequent admixture of races, of the most heterogeneous character. Along the coast, the elegance of the Grecian type, occasionally modified by the dignified features and martial bearing of the Roman, whose physical traits had been partially preserved by the frequent renewal of garrisons and the importation of colonists from Italy and Constantinople, largely predominated. Further inland appeared, in the swarthy complexions, blue eyes, and auburn locks, the cross between Vandal and Mauritanian, side by side with the unmistakable lineaments of the Syrian and the Jew. But most numerous of all, the most formidable in war, the most perfidious in peace, were the Berbers, whose origin tradition has variously assigned to Europe, Assyria, Arabia, Ethiopia, and Palestine. Whatever may have been the home of this undoubtedly Semitic race, their affinity with the Arabs was most conspicuous and remarkable. Generous, brave, patient of suffering, prodigal of hospitality, reverential to the aged, loyal to their kindred, impatient of restraint, merciless in revenge, their character was an epitome of the rugged virtues and cruel vices of the roving barbarian. The fighting qualities of this people, joined to the inaccessible nature of their haunts, and, in no small degree, aided by their poverty, had always secured for them immunity from conquest. Political reverses had never been able to efface their national peculiarities. Under persecution, while apparently conforming to the public faith, they remained, in reality, fetich worshippers. The long dominations of Phœnician, Roman, Byzantine, Teuton had effected no alteration in their language—the Arabic alone has been able to engross about a third of the terms of their guttural idiom. Their polity resembled a republic, where each village was independent and governed by a chieftain elected by the people. Time and again they had mustered for service against the Emperor armies of thirty and forty thousand men; but the first defeat dissolved their confederacy; and the rival chiefs returned with increased avidity to the plunder and massacre of their allies and friends. Their perfidy, which excited the unwilling admiration of nations long practised in the arts of deceit, and which was experienced to their cost by the Romans in the war with Jugurtha, was, without doubt, in a measure responsible for the proverbial reputation for duplicity—the " Punica fides"—of Carthage. Originally idolaters, believers in sorcery and divination, and adorers of the Sun and of Fire, their intercourse with their neighbors, considering its irregular and transitory character, had been singularly productive of changes in religious belief. The emissaries of Christianity had, with but indifferent success, disseminated among them the mysteries of their faith; but to the doctrines of the Pentateuch and the Talmud they lent a willing ear, and the tenets of Judaism, although not a little tinctured with the traditions of Pagan mythology, nominally received the assent of the entire Berber nation. The peculiar type of the Hebrew, insensibly diversified elsewhere by the associations of commercial intercourse, and by the influence of soil, climate, and the operation of laws more or less favorable to the fusion of races, had, in the wilds of Northern Africa, found a congenial locality for its preservation. The exiles who had escaped the persecutions of Titus and Hadrian had settled there and prospered. Laying aside their proverbial reserve, they had joined to their hereditary inclination for traffic an unwonted disposition to acquire proselytes; and their opinions had infected, to a greater or less extent, the population of the coast as well as that of the interior, from the Greater Syrtis to the Pillars of Hercules. Their relations and acquaintance extended not only to the extreme Orient, but were sustained with the semi-barbarous courts of Europe; and their sympathies with their brethren of Semitic origin, assisted by the community of ideas, habits, and mode of life of the Berber tribes, contributed, in a degree which cannot be overestimated, to the establishment and preservation of the Western empire of Islam.

In the year 647, the covetous glances of the government at Medina were turned towards the rich plantations and populous settlements of Al-Maghreb; and the predatory inroads which had hitherto vexed its borders were, for the first time, superseded by a systematic and determined attempt at conquest. The weakness and partiality of Othman, with whom the aggrandizement of his family was a paramount consideration, had removed the famous Amru from the viceroyalty of Egypt, and invested with its administration Abdallah-Ibn-Sa'd, the foster-brother of the Khalif, a warrior of experience and courage and the finest horseman of his nation, but a man whose renown had been sullied by the crime of apostasy, and who had used an employment of confidence to ridicule and revile the inspired teachings and sacred character of the Prophet.

Calling into requisition all the resources of his government, this Moslem general marched into the Desert with twenty thousand soldiers, among them many of the companions of Mohammed and representatives of the most noble tribes of Arabia. After a few unimportant skirmishes, and a short but bloody engagement in which a division of the Greeks was entirely destroyed, the Arab army advanced to Tripoli, and, investing its walls, pushed forward the operations of the siege with an energy hardly to be expected from a people whose experience had been confined to marauding expeditions and the stratagems of partisan warfare. Under the dominion of the Byzantine emperors, the office of prefect had been substituted for that of the ancient proconsul; and this employment was not only charged with the execution of the laws relating to civil and military affairs, but also claimed jurisdiction over matters pertaining to the welfare of the church, the appointment of its ministers, and the enforcement of the canons of ecclesiastical discipline. The prefect Gregory, whose talents had been exercised, and whose prowess had been approved, in many negotiations and conflicts with the Berbers, at the head of a tumultuous and undisciplined force of one hundred and twenty thousand men, moved forward to the relief of Tripoli. Abandoning the siege, the Arabs accepted the challenge, and a series of battles ensued without decided advantage upon either side, until the prefect, mortified that the numerical superiority of his troops should be neutralized by the desperate courage of his adversaries, offered the hand of his beautiful daughter—who, completely armed, was each day conspicuous in the ranks of the vanguard—and a purse of one hundred thousand pieces of gold to any one who would bring him the head of the Moslem general. The courage of Abdallah, although he had faced death in a hundred forms, was not proof against this effort of his wily antagonist, and, remaining idly in his tent, he left the conduct of operations to the care of his lieutenants. In the mean time there arrived at the Arab camp a small detachment headed by Ibn-al-Zobeir, a warrior of distinction, who heard with contempt of the pusillanimous conduct of the general. Seeking him, he denounced his cowardice, suggesting that he should retaliate by the offer of a similar sum, and the prefect's daughter as a slave, to whoever should cast at his feet the head of the Greek commander. The advice was taken; the tempting reward was published throughout the camp; the Arab youth were fired by emulation to redoubled efforts; and Abdallah himself, shamed into action, again appeared in the front of battle. But the overwhelming numbers of the Greeks, inspired by the example of a few legions which yet retained the traditions of Roman steadiness and discipline, and supported by the rapid evolutions of the Numidian cavalry, famous from the days of Jugurtha, still rendered the issue doubtful, and by repeated engagements the ranks of the Arabs were being constantly diminished. Again the talents of Ibn-al-Zobeir were called into requisition; the battle was renewed as usual at daybreak; and when the blazing sun had exhausted the strength of the combatants, both armies retired to the shelter of their tents. But the Moslems had not all been engaged, and a division composed of troops, selected for their bravery and commanded by the intrepid Ibn-al-Zobeir, burst suddenly like a thunderbolt upon the hostile camp.

Seized with a panic, as they were reposing after the arduous struggle of the day, the ranks of the enemy were broken, the prefect was killed, and the camp given over to pillage. A rich booty and innumerable captives compensated the victors for their trials; the beauteous Amazon became the slave of Ibn-al-Zobeir; and, after the capture of the important city of Sufetela, the entire district acknowledged the authority of the Khalif. The ravages of disease, the losses resulting from a series of engagements lasting for months, and the lack of reinforcements, made it impossible for Abdallah to garrison the towns, or to retain in subjection the restless tribes of the interior; and he consented, with alacrity, to accept a bribe of two million five hundred thousand dinars and abandon the conquest. The spoil was sent to Medina, and Othman further incurred the charges of injustice and nepotism by presenting Abdallah with the royal fifth, and by permitting his cousin Merwan to purchase the remainder at the low valuation of three hundred talents of gold.

For nearly a quarter of a century, the civil wars provoked by the conflicting claims of the various aspirants to the throne of the khalifate and the succeeding political establishments left in security the Greek possessions of the West. The Byzantine court learned with amazement of the enormous ransom with which the inhabitants of Africa had purchased the withdrawal of the invaders; and its avarice was excited when it considered the resources of a country which could collect so large a sum after having, for generations, been subject to the rapacious inquisition of the imperial tax-gatherers. Without delay, the Emperor demanded a contribution of the same amount as unpaid tribute; and all the mechanism of extortion was employed, to complete the ruin of his already impoverished subjects. Oppressed beyond endurance, the Africans sent an embassy headed by the Patriarch himself to Damascus, and reciting their grievances, described in glowing terms to Muavia the wealth of their country and the advantages which must accrue to the Moslems from its possession. The Khalif, deeply impressed by their representations, ordered Ibn-Hajij, governor of Egypt, to undertake the conquest; but the enterprise was not carried out with the customary vigor of the Saracens, and resulted only in the partial occupancy of the coast and the subjection of a few unimportant cities. The permanent establishment of Mussulman rule dates, however, from this expedition, and henceforth the standard of Islam, although often furled before the intrepid spirit of the Berbers, was advanced, foot by foot, to the far distant shores of the Western Ocean. The most successful commander, and the one who alone, excepting Musa, made the most enduring impression upon the valiant and treacherous barbarians of Al-Maghreb, was Okbah-Ibn-Nafi, who was next invested with the command. Entering the hostile region at the head of ten thousand veteran cavalry, he made war with the same resolution and uncompromising spirit which marked the careers of the daring Amru and Khalid, " The Sword of God." The Christians who refused, by either submission or conversion, to acknowledge the divine origin of Islam were ruthlessly slaughtered; but the orders of the Khalif explicitly prohibited the equipment or use of naval armaments, and the seaports of the Greeks escaped, for the time, the fate which was inevitable. The Berbers, beholding with wonder the apparently invincible character of their enemy, equally fortunate in plain and mountain fastness, defeating with ease their bravest squadrons, and scaling, despite all obstacles, the all-but impregnable defences of their strongholds, clothed him with the attributes of divinity, and, submitting to his dominion, recognized the power of the Khalif, while at the same time, abjuring their idolatry, they confessed the unity and majesty of God. The advance of Okbah was the triumphant progress of a conqueror. Almost unresisted, he traversed the regions peopled by hordes of fierce barbarians, until, having penetrated to the Atlantic, he rode his horse into its seething waters, and, drawing his sword, cried out, " God is great! Were I not hindered by this sea, I would go forward to the unknown kingdoms of the West, proclaiming the greatness of Thy Holy Name and subduing those nations who worship other gods than Thee!"

The moral effect of the expedition of Okbah, which familiarized the nations of the north of Africa with the doctrines of Islam, was of far more importance than the spoil collected by the victorious army, which was, in itself, not inconsiderable. The wealth of the Berbers, ignorant as they were of the mechanical arts and the elegant appliances of luxury, was confined to flocks and herds; but the beauty and fascinations of their women aroused the passions of the conquerors, and many of them subsequently commanded in the markets of Alexandria and Damascus the extraordinary price of a thousand mithcals of gold. The inconstant character of the tribes of Mauritania and the Atlas, amenable only to the restraints of military power, and to whom conversion and apostasy were mere matters of temporary expediency, suggested to the sagacious mind of Okbah the necessity for the establishment of a fortified post in the territory of this active and formidable enemy. An inland position was selected, to avoid the attacks of the naval forces of Constantinople, and, despite the serious physical disadvantages of barrenness, drought, and excessive heat, a city was built, to which was given the name of Kairoan; a metropolis destined in after times to attain to an important rank in the annals of the dynasties of Africa. The walls were of brick, with flanking towers, and embraced six miles in circuit. The foundations of a mosque, an edifice measuring two hundred and twenty by one hundred and fifty cubits, were laid; its seventeen naves were adorned with the plundered marbles of Utica and Carthage; the graceful proportions of its minaret and the elegance of its mural decorations are still proverbial in the Mohammedan world. The bazaar of the city lined a street three miles in length; its schools became the resort of the learned; the authority of its muftis on points of doctrine was indisputable; and, as the seat of the viceroy of the Khalif, it long maintained its political importance.

The implacable and perfidious spirit of the Berbers, whom no treaties could control, now broke out in the prosecution of petty hostilities, which the scattered forces of the Moslems were powerless to prevent. Forays were made upon isolated settlements, flocks were driven off, hamlets given to the flames, and even the security of the rising colony of Kairoan was threatened. Emboldened by their success, the Berber chiefs confederated for the total destruction of the Moslems. Koceila, an influential chieftain, who had been wantonly insulted and maimed by Okbah and was now kept a close prisoner in the camp, was the moving spirit of the conspiracy. Learning too late of the plan of the enemy, Okbah was compelled to weaken his army, and while a detachment for the relief of Kairoan was on the march, it was suddenly attacked near Tehuda by an overwhelming force of barbarian cavalry. The little band of Mussulmans, less than four hundred in number, seeing the hopelessness of the contest, commended themselves to God, and, casting away their scabbards, perished to a man, scimetar in hand. The tombs of these martyrs are still objects of veneration to the devout, and Zab, where they are situated, enjoys the sanctity, privileges, and lucrative trade of a place of pilgrimage. The Franks and Berbers with their usual inconstancy now flocked to the standard of Koceila, who assumed the title of an independent sovereign and for five years remained the undisputed ruler of Ifrikiyah. At the expiration of that period, a fresh army of Arabs under Zoheir defeated the Berbers in a decisive battle, and, Koceila having been killed, the lieutenant of the Khalif again asserted his unstable authority. It was not long before the new governor Zoheir succumbed to the treachery of the cunning barbarians, and the Khalif Abd-al-Melik imposed upon Hassan, Viceroy of Egypt, the task which had foiled the skill and energy of so many of his predecessors. But none of the latter had mustered such a force, or could have controlled such vast resources, as did the new commander-in-chief. His office, as Governor of Egypt, placed at his disposal the enormous wealth of that fertile country, and he marched out of Alexandria at the head of a thoroughly equipped army of forty thousand veterans. He was well provided with scaling ladders and the various engines for the siege of fortified places, while the success of the Moslems in the East had inspired them with confidence, and afforded experience in the attack upon fortifications, a branch of warfare in which they had at first been entirely deficient. Resolving to reduce the strongholds of the coast, which were still in possession of the Greeks, Hassan, after traversing the region which had been desolated, and partially colonized by former commanders, advanced at once upon Carthage. This famous city, which had preserved, amidst unparalleled disaster, the prestige and the traditions of its former greatness, was still the capital of Africa and the seat of the imperial prefect. The power of Phœnicia, almost omnipotent in the maritime world of the ancients, founded upon boundless wealth, upon extensive acquaintance with distant lands and peoples, upon scientific secrets, whose importance was exaggerated by mystery, and upon the undisputed dominion of the seas, had been transmitted to Carthage, her favorite and most important colony. A brief notice of the history of the latter, so intimately connected with the fortunes of every nation of ancient and modern Europe, is not foreign to an account of the Mohammedan conquest of Africa, nor to that of the subsequent occupation of Spain. For, inspired by her example, from her harbor issued the first naval expedition of the Moslems in the West, which ravaged the coasts of Sardinia, threatened the Greek empire, and subdued the Balearic Isles. The invention of the compass, popularly but erroneously attributed to the sailors of Amalfi, it has been conjectured, with some degree of probability, was in reality a legacy of Tyre to Carthage; and it is certain that the peculiar properties of the magnet, designated the Stone of Hercules, were familiar to the mariners of those cities, who employed it in divination and in the secret ceremonies of their temples upon the shores of every sea. The straight sword of the Spanish Arab, so different from the curved blade of the Orient, is the sword of the Carthaginian; a weapon which, subsequently adopted by Rome from Iberia, conquered the world, including the African warriors who invented it. The cap of the Basque is a modification of the old Punic, or Phrygian, head covering, still worn by the Jewesses of Tunis, and which, in our day, has been adopted as one of the emblems of Liberty. The toga of Rome and the burnous of the Arab can be traced to the same origin, being derived by Carthage from Phœnicia, and by the latter from Lydia; and the names, customs, traditions, and ceremonies of modern Spain suggest daily, to the intelligent observer, the enduring impressions produced by the domination of the ancient Queen of the Mediterranean. Even in her ruin did Carthage contribute to the progress of science and the well-being of humanity. The cathedral of Pisa, under whose dome Galileo pursued his experiments and perfected the pendulum-clock, was constructed of the marbles of her palaces; and the unrivalled mosque of Cordova, the centre of mediæval learning, in whose precincts was the finest library of the age, still contains hundreds of columns, around whose shafts once curled the wreaths of incense that rose from the altars of the Tyrian Hercules. But far more important than all else was the influence exerted upon the Arab invaders by the defaced and shattered memorials of her departed grandeur. Despite the effects of Roman hate and vengeance, the destructive energy of Genseric, and the shameless neglect of the Byzantine emperors, Carthage was still a great and beautiful city. Many of her stately edifices were preserved; her temples, towering in their pristine majesty, beckoned the anxious mariner to her prosperous shores; her harbors with their colonnades were still intact, and it was with no ordinary emotions that the Moslem looked upon these evidences of the taste and civilization of one of the most opulent and renowned capitals of antiquity. The Phœnicians, by their proximity to and regular intercourse with the highly cultivated races of Assyria and Egypt, had added immeasurably to their stock of learning, and eagerly disseminated among their colonies the notions of politics, philosophy, and science, which they had imbibed in their periodical voyages to the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile. And as from Asia Minor, plainly disclosed in the myth of Cadmus, first emanated that knowledge of letters and the arts, which, expanding with a prodigious development, culminated in the matchless creations of the Grecian sculptor and the Grecian muse; so to the northern coast of Africa can be traced the dawn of that inspiration of refinement and taste which awakened in the minds of the rude and warlike nomads of the Desert a desire for something better than the subjugation of barbarian tribes, something more enduring than the costly pageants of military glory.

Settled almost thirteen centuries before the Christian era, and inheriting from the parent city of Tyre that spirit of enterprise which had gained for the latter the carrying trade of the world, at the time of the foundation of Rome, Carthage was already the wealthiest and most polished state on the shores of the Mediterranean. Her inhabitants, rather inclined to peaceful occupations and the luxurious ease that prosperity confers than to the privations of the camp and the dangers of the field, usually enlisted mercenaries to prosecute their conquests. When at the height of her power, her armies, which had penetrated the mysterious depths of the Libyan and Ethiopian deserts, and whose prowess had been displayed alike in the defiles of Sicily and upon the plains of the Bætis, had subjected to her authority a wide extent of territory, and more than three hundred towns in Africa alone, many of them places of considerable magnitude. In the Spanish Peninsula, whence she drew her supplies of the precious metals, she employed in the silver mines fifty thousand men. The most assiduous care was paid to agriculture, and the extraordinary fertility of the soil, yielding with ease one hundred and fifty fold, was assisted by an equable climate and a scientific and extensive system of irrigation. The substantial character of the public works of the capital is evinced by the ruins of the cisterns and the aqueduct, which have defied the storms and revolutions of two thousand years. But it was chiefly in commercial affairs that the Carthaginians asserted their immeasurable superiority over all their contemporaries. Their merchants, whose enterprise was proverbial, were familiar with some of the ingenious expedients that, in our day, among civilized nations, so facilitate and simplify important business transactions. The most remarkable of these described by Latin writers were certain pieces of leather which, when folded in a peculiar manner, and sealed to prevent forgery, readily passed as money, undoubted precursors of our bank-notes and bills of exchange. They seem to have had also well-defined ideas of the fiscal and other regulations demanded by the exigencies of foreign trade, such as banking, insurance, and duties on imports.

Until the conclusion of the second Punic War, no noticeable progress had been made in the arts at Rome, and the total destruction of Carthage was, in this respect, as in many others, of incalculable advantage to her fortunate adversary. Among the treasures procured at the sack of the city are mentioned, besides paintings and statues, gold and silver vessels of curious workmanship, and so valuable that the portion reserved for the triumph of the victor amounted to a sum equal to eight million dollars. In the spoil were also included beautiful mosaics, and incredible quantities of precious stones, articles of luxury especially prized by the Carthaginians, and which they knew how to engrave with surprising skill. These exquisite models, perfected by the labors of countless generations, were not without a decided effect in promoting the education and stimulating the ambition of the Roman designers and artisans. We learn from Appian that there were many libraries in the city, which also boasted not a few writers of note, but none of their productions have been preserved, and the only native author whose fame has reached posterity is Terence, a liberated slave, who, at the age of twenty-five, delighted the critical audiences of the Roman theatres with the flights of his precocious genius. Some estimate may be formed of the military and naval power of Carthage, when we recall the fact that during the Sicilian wars, which lasted twenty-four years, she lost, in a single battle, five hundred ships of the largest size, together with an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, without sensibly impairing her resources or retarding her career of conquest. Had a similar misfortune befallen any contemporaneous state it could hardly have survived the shock. The equipage and plate of the Carthaginian generals were of the most sumptuous description, and they went into action bearing magnificent bucklers embossed with medallion portraits of their owners in massy gold.

Occupying the centre of the Southern Mediterranean coast, and accessible to every port frequented by traders, Carthage was speedily enabled to profit to the utmost by those advantages of geographical position that paved the way to her political and maritime ascendency. At her left hand were the Pillars of Hercules, and the channel through which passed the trade of Spain and Britain; at her right the inexhaustible granaries of Egypt; in front of her, the quarries, mines, and slave-marts of Italy and Greece; in her rear the gold and gems of Libya. Upon a peninsula, whose isthmus was defended by a triple wall, lay the city, embracing a circuit of twenty-three miles, and containing a population of nearly a million. Inside the fortifications, on the east, was the Kothon, a double harbor, consisting of two circular basins connected by a canal sixty feet wide, barricaded with enormous iron chains. The outer and larger basin, six thousand feet in circumference, was destined for the use of merchantmen; the inner one was reserved exclusively for galleys and men-of-war. Both were surrounded by docks, storehouses, quarters for marines, and arsenals, and were approached by splendid Ionic porticos and colonnades of white marble. In the centre of an island in the inner harbor, at whose quays two hundred vessels could ride securely at anchor, rose the castle of the admiral who directed all manœuvres at the sound of trumpet. Immediately over the Kothon, on an elevation that commanded it, stood the famous Byrsa, or citadel. Its wall rose to the height of sixty-five feet, and was flanked by numerous towers; adjoining the latter were stables for four thousand horses and three hundred elephants, and barracks that could accommodate a garrison of twenty-four thousand men. Eighteen cisterns, seven of which are still intact, each ninety-three feet long by twenty wide and twenty-eight feet deep, connected by a tunnel with reservoirs in the suburbs, furnished an abundant supply of water. The highest point of the Byrsa was occupied by the temple of Æsculapius, the tutelary deity of the city, and although, in fact, an almost impregnable fortress, the skill of the engineer had thoroughly disguised its formidable character. It was situated above a series of terraces, resembling the hanging gardens of Assyria, and was reached by superb marble staircases adorned with beautiful statues, urns, and other works of art. Slabs of porphyry and verd-antique covered its walls; its arcades were paved and encrusted with mosaics; and the veneration in which it was held by the people was attested by the gorgeous appointments of its shrine. But the fane of Æsculapius, with all its splendor, was not without many rivals in the African metropolis. The religion of the Carthaginians, originally astronomical and profoundly symbolic, had centuries before discarded the purer forms of astral worship for a debased and cruel polytheism. The different wards of the city were named from the various deities whose altars they contained. West of the Kothon was the temple of Apollo, and adjoining it the shrine of Melcareth, or Hercules—whose precincts no woman was suffered to enter, and whose priests, assuming the vow of chastity, went barefoot and with shaven crowns—stood side by side with the fragrant gardens within whose mystic groves were celebrated, amidst indescribable orgies, the licentious rites of the Phœnician Astarte. Nearer the sea was the grand temple of the African Baal, the Moloch of the Hebrews, surrounded by a labyrinth and covered with three concentric domes, which, open above like that of the Pantheon at Rome, permitted the rays of the sun at high meridian to descend upon the brazen image of the god.

The other edifices of the African capital were, in richness and splendor, eminently worthy of its temples and its citadel. The vast commerce of Carthage placed at its command the resources of all antiquity. No labor or expense was spared in architectural decoration. On the façade of its theatre, which rose for seven stories in tiers of graceful arches, were sculptured the forms of animals, the effigies of famous artisans, the figures of military commanders, and symbolical representations of the elements, the seasons, and the winds. The circus, inferior in extent only to that of Rome, was supported by fluted columns of such enormous size that twelve men could sit with ease upon the edge of one of their capitals towering a hundred feet above the arena. In the principal square, the reservoir, fed by the great aqueduct, was surrounded by balustrades and arches. All of these public works were of white marble, which glittered like crystal under the rays of a southern sun. The taste which designed them was the result of three thousand years of civilization. Every nation of the ancient world had contributed its share to their symmetry, their value, their magnificence. The beauty of the material was enhanced a thousand-fold by the incomparable elegance of the sculpture and the ornamentation.

The Megara, a suburb of Carthage, contained the country-seats and palaces of the nobility, some of them built, like the houses of Venice, upon piles and arches in the sea. It was an immense park seamed with canals and rivulets, whose waters were conveyed by conduits from the mountains sixty miles away. The reservoirs of the Megara, so extensive that they now constitute an Arab village, were constructed in the same substantial manner as the cisterns of the

Byrsa. On a promontory above them was the necropolis, where the ashes of the dead were deposited in countless niches hewn in the living rock.

Upon the ruins of this rich and powerful city, which had so long and so obstinately disputed the supremacy of the masters of the world, had risen another that almost rivalled its predecessor in commercial importance and architectural splendor. Founded one hundred and one years after the triumph of Scipio, it yielded in prestige and luxury only to the great capitals of Italy and Egypt, and was justly regarded as one of the most valuable possessions of the Roman colonial empire. Its advantages of location, the agricultural wealth of the country, the settlement of many noble Italian families—fugitives from imperial oppression and barbarian violence—and the glorious example of former ages, soon raised the new metropolis to a position scarcely inferior to that of the old. Its edifices could vie with even the proudest monuments of the Eternal City; the wealth, intelligence, polished manners, and boundless excesses of its inhabitants made its name proverbial throughout antiquity. In the seventh century it divided with Alexandria the commerce of the Mediterranean, and was greatly its superior in rank, population, and power. The head of the civil magistracy of Africa, and the seat of a large military garrison, it almost monopolized the taste and refinement, the learning, the philosophy, and the jurisprudence, of the Western world. Universities with chairs of the liberal arts, academies which afforded instruction in every language and every science, flourished within its walls; its circus and its amphitheatre were crowded daily with the wit and beauty of the city, whose pleasure-loving society, unspeakably corrupt, had added to the dissolute habits inherited from Punic times the unnatural vices imported by patrician refugees and colonists from the orgies of decadent Rome. For perversity of disposition, for shameless effrontery, for perfidious disregard of faith and contempt of honor, and for brazen immodesty, the most debauched communities of the East and West, by universal consent, conferred upon the population of Carthage the unenviable distinction of unapproachable infamy. The Vandals had plundered its treasures and enslaved its people, but had spared its noble buildings, and exempted its walls from the destruction which had usually befallen those of other towns conquered by these barbarians. Such was the city which interposed a formidable and hitherto insuperable barrier to the enterprise of the Moslems; and whose transcendent influence has left its stamp upon the habits, the creeds, and the opinions of every subsequent age; to which ancient commerce was indebted for its development, and from which modern belief has derived some of the most popular of its dogmas; among them the doctrines of St. Augustine and the leading principles of patristic theology, that even now control ecclesiastical councils and prescribe the rules of Christian discipline.

His preparations completed, the Moslem general, seconded by the enthusiasm of his splendid army, and confident of success, prepared at once for an assault. The ladders were planted, and despite the terrors of Greek fire, and the valor of the Byzantine garrison which behaved with unusual spirit, the city was taken. But, in the mean time, news of the danger of the colony had reached the Bosphorus; the Court was aroused from its lethargy; a powerful fleet was equipped; and the Moslems had scarcely rested from their efforts before the arrival of this new enemy compelled them to retreat. A few months later, however, reinforcements having been received by Hassan, Carthage was again stormed; a decisive victory was gained by the Moslems over the Greeks, who imprudently risked an engagement in the open field; the city was plundered and burnt; and the jurisdiction over its territory passed away forever from the hands of the corrupt and pusillanimous sovereigns of the Eastern Empire.

But the destruction of the capital, a political measure to secure supremacy, while producing a decisive moral effect upon the remaining colonies of the Greeks, was far from intimidating the Berbers, whose omnipresent squadrons remained the masters of all the region situated beyond the fortified towers of the frontier. A female impostor of princely lineage—whose name, Dhabba', has been abandoned by subsequent chroniclers for the popular appellation Kahina, or Sorceress—had, by her mysterious arts, obtained unbounded influence over her countrymen; and, inspiring them with a certain degree of patriotism, had appeased their feuds and united the roving tribes of the Atlas in an extensive and powerful confederacy. Animated by her teachings and allured by her promise of booty, the Berbers pressed upon the forces of Hassan until the latter, after great losses, were finally expelled, and repairing to Barca, remained there in a state of inglorious inactivity for nearly five years. It is related that as soon as the enemy had passed the borders, the sorceress-queen ordered the fertile region of the coast, which, in the days of its prosperity, had furnished the supplies of the Empire, and whose beauty had been celebrated by every traveller, to be utterly desolated, as a precaution against future invasion. The fields were laid waste, the towns depopulated, the harvests burnt, the orchards cut down, the plantations transformed into a wilderness. This irrational act of violence was not viewed with complacency by the landholders and other civilized inhabitants of the country, and, from time to time, emissaries were despatched to the Arab Viceroy of Africa, promising him in return for his interference the assistance and future allegiance of the persecuted colonists. At length the order to advance arrived from Damascus, and Hassan, with the most numerous army that had ever invaded Africa, encountered the priestess at the head of her adherents near Mount Auras. In the battle that ensued, Kahina was killed; the Berbers were overwhelmingly defeated; and the whole of the refractory province again invoked the clemency of the victor. But the same evil genius which, from first to last, attended the administration of the Moslem governors of Africa, now began to disturb the fortunes of Hassan. Abd-al-Aziz, the brother of the Khalif, was appointed to the viceroyalty of Egypt, upon which the jurisdiction of Africa was made dependent; and Hassan was summoned to Damascus, to answer serious accusations of tyrannical conduct which had been lodged against him. But the sight of the spoil wrested from the Berbers, the present of female captives of extraordinary beauty, the plausible explanations of his conduct which his fertile ingenuity suggested, and the glowing accounts of his successes, soon restored the distinguished commander to the favor of his sovereign, and Hassan was reinvested with the government of Africa with increased authority. On the return of the latter, while passing through Egypt, Abd-al-Aziz demanded the surrender of his commission under color of the supremacy formerly attached to the viceroyalty of that country, and by which the rest of Mohammedan Africa was claimed as a dependency. Enraged by his refusal, the governor arbitrarily deprived Hassan of his commission, tore it in pieces before his face, and, in defiance of the royal authority, declared the office vacant, and appointed at his own instance Musa-Ibn-Nosseyr commander of the armies of the West.

The history of this famous soldier is tinged with a coloring of adventure, unusual even in the romantic atmosphere of the Orient. A hundred miles directly west of Ctesiphon is Ain-Tamar, now an oasis frequented by wandering banditti, but in the seventh century a prosperous settlement enriched by the trade of Syria and Persia, and the seat of a Nestorian church and monastery. Attracted by the reports of its wealth, an expedition headed by Khalid himself surprised it, after a long and painful march over the desert. In the cloisters of the monastery were found a number of youths of high rank, who were nominally pursuing their studies under the direction of the monks, but were in reality hostages selected from the most distinguished families of Asia Minor. When offered the customary alternative of slavery or apostasy, the majority chose the latter, and two of them, Sirin and Nosseyr, became the fathers of sons who exerted a wide-spread influence over the destinies of Islam. From Sirin descended Mohammed the learned doctor of Bassora, and one of the most famous authorities of Islamic literature; and Nosseyr was the parent of Musa, the conqueror of Africa and Spain. Nosseyr was attached to the family of Abd-al-Melik by the right of capture and Mohammedan custom, and his son occupied the same relation to Abd-al-Aziz, the heir of the Khalif, who bestowed upon him marks of distinguished favor, and shared with him a friendship rare indeed in the families of princes. Educated in the best schools of Syria, which had already attained a high and well-deserved reputation, Musa early developed a precocity of intellect, and a talent for negotiation, which led to his employment in diplomatic affairs of the greatest importance. Under the reign of Abd-al-Melik, he was appointed vizier to the governor of Bassora, but having been convicted of peculation, he only escaped with his life through the intercession of his protector Abd-al-Aziz, who also paid for him the fine of one hundred dinars of gold—fifty times the amount of the theft—which the wrath of the Khalif had imposed upon the defaulter. Residing afterwards at the court of Egypt, and acting as the trusted councillor of the viceroy, history is silent as to the fields in which he acquired the experience in arms that subsequently gained for him such enduring renown. Of a hardy constitution, inured to hardship, plain in his attire, frugal and abstemious in his habits, his form presented an example of robust health, although he had long since passed the meridian of life; and under his locks, whitened by the snows of many winters, still smouldered the ardent passions of youth, and the powerful incentives of ambition and adventure. Sagacious in council, prompt in execution, fearless in battle, implacable in revenge, his character was, however, tarnished by cruelty, by suspicion, and by ingratitude; and he never hesitated to risk the sacrifice of power and position, in the gratification of the avarice which seemed to dominate his being, almost to the exclusion of every other passion. Unrivalled in tact and instinctive knowledge of human nature, by his powers of persuasion he made even his enemies subservient to his designs; while the strict observance of the ceremonies of his religion, although he became liable at times to imputations of inconsistency, yet procured for him in general the reputation of profound and sincere piety. In his military operations, he displayed the qualities of a skilful and wary leader, and his dispositions were made with remarkable prudence; realizing the demands of successful warfare, he annihilated the power of his adversaries by massacre or wholesale captivity; and by rapid and sudden advances after a battle he never failed to secure the uncertain fruits of victory. Such was the character of the man to whom were now committed the destinies of the Moslem armies of the West.

The veterans who had served under the banner of Hassan, who had scaled the walls of Carthage, and dispersed the army of the Berber sorceress, looked with little favor upon their new commander. Calling them together, Musa paid them their arrears three times over, and addressing them in a speech in which the eloquence of the orator, the humility of the devotee, and the art of the demagogue were shrewdly blended, said: "I am a soldier, like yourselves; applaud and imitate my good deeds; censure and reprove my failures, for none of us are free from weakness and error." Impressed not only with the politic generosity of their chief, but gratified as well by the unwonted condescension he displayed, the soldiers greeted him with applause, and he became henceforth the idol of his army. Without unnecessary delay, and with his accustomed vigor, he opened the campaign. At the very outset an incident occurred which not only secured the gratitude of his followers, but, in that superstitious age, seemed to invest their general with supernatural powers. A long-continued drought had dried up the springs and wells, and the army, now far advanced into the desert, was threatened with death by thirst. In the midst of the troops solemnly assembled, Musa prayed long and fervently for relief. Tradition relates that the supplication was almost immediately granted; and the identical prayer which evoked this apparent miracle was repeated for nine centuries afterwards by the Spanish Moors when their country suffered from a scarcity of rain. The Berbers, elated by their former successes, ventured upon a pitched battle, and were defeated. Thousands were killed; the fugitives who took refuge in the mountains, where the natural obstacles of the locality made their defences the more formidable, were besieged and forced to surrender. The policy of Musa, different from that of his predecessors, was marked by unusual severity. If resistance was offered, the tribe was enslaved, its property confiscated, and its villages burnt to the ground; but, on the other hand, a ready submission guaranteed protection and favor, and the stoutest warriors were at once enrolled in the Moslem ranks. Twelve times already had the Berbers professed adherence to Islam, and apostatized; and Musa, conscious of their instability, now provided his new troops with teachers learned in the Koran, who could give them daily instruction in their religious duties. Their new associations, the trust reposed in them, the separation from their kindred, and the boundless prospect of plunder and glory, soon transformed these unruly bands into a serviceable force, capable of the greatest exploits. The seizure of the horses, cattle, and sheep, which constituted the wealth of the Berbers, compensated the victors, in some degree, for the absence of the costly booty which had rewarded the courage of their brethren in Syria and Egypt; while the prodigious number of slaves, resulting from the depopulation of entire provinces, provided a source of wealth whose profits were easily realized in the markets of Alexandria and Damascus. The royal fifth of the latter reserved by Musa amounted to sixty thousand, a number so vast as to be incredible, and which caused the Khalif to regard the announcement as false when he received it. With characteristic munificence, he directed Musa to reimburse himself for the fine which he had formerly paid as the penalty for his dishonesty, and, at the same time, he granted to him and the most distinguished soldiers of the army pensions commensurate with their services.

The invasion and sack of Medina by the Syrians, bent upon retribution for the murder of Othman, had caused a great emigration from Arabia, and thousands of the descendants of the proudest families of the

Holy Cities had established themselves in Africa, and had rendered great aid to the projects of Musa. Their incorporation into the armies of Al-Maghreb and Iberia sensibly affected the fortunes of the latter country, and indirectly led to the restoration of the dynasty of the Ommeyades. Four sons of Musa had accompanied him in his campaign, and now deputing his authority to the two eldest, he despatched them to the South and West, where a few remaining Berber tribes still asserted their independence. Following the example of their father they exterminated such tribes as dared to resist, and in a few months returned to Kairoan, whither Musa had retired with considerable spoil and a large number of captives. In the mean time, the latter, recognizing the supreme importance of naval operations, and treating with contempt the absurd prejudice of his countrymen whose superstitious dread of the sea amounted at times to absolute terror, ordered the refitting of the dock-yards and harbors of Carthage, whose substantial quays had been little impaired by the successive calamities which had befallen the city. A hundred vessels were built, launched, and manned; Abdallah was appointed admiral; the fleet cruised along the coast of the Mediterranean, and crossing to Sicily, sacked the city of Linosa and returned in triumph with a booty of twenty thousand pieces of gold. Four years afterwards a descent was made by Abdallah on the Balearic Isles, and Majorca was, after a short campaign, added to the dominions of the Khalif.

Their incorrigible duplicity and restlessness, and the absence of a competent military force, again impelled the tribes of the interior to revolt. Taking the field at the head of a picked force, Musa, with trifling difficulty, took Tangier, the last fortified post held by the Greeks in Al-Maghreb; and sending his son Merwan with five thousand cavalry against Sus-al-Aska, the head-quarters of the insurgents, soon had the satisfaction of learning that the rebellion was subdued, and the recalcitrant Berbers punished with a rigor unexampled even in the sanguinary wars of Africa. After making two attempts to capture Ceuta, one of the keys of the strait separating Africa from Europe, both of which the gallant behavior of the governor, Count Julian, rendered ineffectual, Musa appointed Tarik-Ibn-Zeyad, a Berber convert, formerly his slave, and now one of his most trusty officers, to the command of Tangier, and returned to Kairoan.

With the surrender of Tangier the Byzantine domination in Africa came to an end. Sixty years of warfare, the destruction of fleets, the annihilation of armies, the devastation of provinces, the enslavement of nations, had been required to accomplish this result, never for a moment lost sight of by the Moslems amidst the imbroglios of courts and the revolts of pretenders to the Khalifate of Damascus. The abnormally perfidious and martial character of the Berber placed him outside the category of ordinary enemies. No reverses, however severe, could break his spirit. He ignored the obligation of treaties. No resource remained, therefore, but depopulation. The number of slaves made by the Mussulmans in Africa excited the amazement of their brethren in the East. A successful campaign often yielded two hundred thousand of these unfortunates. Such wholesale captivity was without precedent even in the annals of Rome. The fortresses, with the exception of Ceuta, which was nominally a dependency of the Visigothic kings of Spain—though held by a feeble and uncertain tenure—were now in the possession of the Saracens.

The Berbers either paid tribute to the Khalif or, serving under their own commanders, were enrolled in his armies. Already, after the expiration of only two generations, during which the laws and customs of Mohammedan life can be said to have been established, the momentous effects of polygamy were strikingly noticeable. The children of the pagan slaves who filled the harems of the conquerors were educated in the doctrines of the Koran, and idolatry had totally disappeared, save, perhaps, in some sequestered valley of the Atlas Mountains, where the half-savage devotee bowed before a rude and lonely altar, and with mystic incantations invoked the aid of some misshapen image. Islam, which, even by the reluctant testimony of Christian missionaries, exalts the character of the Negro and invests him with a sense of personal dignity and self-respect which no other religion has been able to inspire, soon gained the professed allegiance of the Berbers; and like the Arab, the more suspicious and clannish they had been in their Age of Ignorance, the more patriotic and enterprising they became as Mohammedans—the very isolation and irreconcilable antagonism of their former condition seemed to insensibly impress them with a realization of the imperative necessity and paramount value of national union. The call to prayer of the muezzin everywhere rang out from the towers of pagan temple and Christian church, whose magnificent decorations, bestowed by penitent Goth and Vandal, had once glittered as trophies amidst the splendid pageantry of a Roman triumph. But, despite community of interest, ethnological resemblance, and identity of religious belief, the environment of the inhabitants of Africa seems to be hostile to the permanent improvement of the human species, and before attaining to the highest degree of development of which the race is elsewhere susceptible, it begins to retrograde. The natural state of this great continent, determined largely by climatic and other physical conditions, is essentially and eternally barbarous. Unlike Europe, which has reaped something of value even from its misfortunes, and, by the example of its achievements in art and letters, subdued its very enemies, the institutions and influence of no polished people have ever impressed upon the natives of Africa any enduring traces. The astounding expansion of the Arab intellect — the crowning phenomenon of the Middle Ages—was as transitory in its effects upon them as the thrift and refinement of Carthage or the more solid and majestic influence of Rome. In some respects resembling Asia—whose voluptuous idleness tends inevitably to physical and mental degeneracy—Africa, with its vast mineral resources, its unsurpassed facilities for commercial intercourse, and its inexhaustible agricultural wealth, has—with the exception of Egypt, whose isolation rendered it practically a foreign country—been of little use to its inhabitants, alike incapable of appreciating these manifold advantages and of systematically employing them for their own benefit or for the general profit of mankind.

CHAPTER IV

THE VISIGOTHIC MONARCHY

507–712

Origin and Character of the Goths—Their Invasion of the Peninsula—Power of the Clergy—Ecclesiastical Councils—The Jews—The Visigothic Code—Profound Wisdom of Its Enactments—Provisions against Fraud and Injustice—Severe Penalties—Its Definition of the Law—Condition of the Mechanical Arts—Architecture—Byzantine Influence—Manufactures—Votive Crowns—Agriculture—Literature—Medicine—Slave Labor—Imitation of Roman Customs—Parallel between the Goths and the Arabs—Coincidence of Sentiments and Habits—Causes of National Decline—Permanent Influence of the Gothic Polity.

Among the countless hordes of barbarians who in the third and fourth centuries overran the provinces of the Roman Empire, and insulted the majesty of the sovereigns of the East, none were so pre-eminently distinguished for valor, loyalty, generosity, and chastity as the Goths. From the third century, when the luxurious tastes of Rome impelled adventurous traders to penetrate to the shores of the Baltic in search of amber, to the establishment of an independent monarchy in Italy by Theodoric in the fifth, their name was familiar to Europe—now suggestive of a bulwark of the tottering throne of Byzantium, and again, as a synonym of murder, pillage, and devastation. Of towering stature and fierce aspect, their forms were cast in the gigantic proportions which pagan mythology loved to attribute to its gods and heroes. Their habitations were situated in the depths of gloomy forests, on the banks of deep and rapid streams, or were surrounded by marshes, over whose treacherous and yielding surface a winding pathway usually led to a remote and well defended stronghold. Like all people whose intellectual development had scarcely begun, they believed implicitly in omens, auguries, signs, and dreams; their religious ideas were vague and ill defined; and neither history nor tradition has preserved for us the appellation or attributes of a single Gothic divinity. At their banquets, defiled by drunken orgies, and not infrequently the scenes of violence and even homicide, were celebrated, in uncouth ballads, the exploits of the famous warriors of the nation. Their very name, indicative of the superiority which their prowess never failed to exact, signified The Nobly Born. Without literature, save a fragmentary translation of the Bible, without government, save the dominion of some chieftain who, covetous of renown, temporarily enjoyed the precarious title of sovereign, eager for change, the most reckless of gamesters, the most pitiless of conquerors, destruction was with them a passion, and war an amusement. In common with other barbarians, with whom the ignorance and fears of the age have confounded them, they claimed and exercised, to the utmost, the privileges of individual dignity and personal freedom. An arbitrary classification, dependent upon a fortuitous geographical distribution, had divided this people into Ostrogoths and Visigoths, according to their relative location upon the eastern and western banks of the river Borysthenes. The pressure from the north, which had dispersed the tribes of the forests of Germany and Pannonia over the European provinces of the Roman Empire, had induced the Visigoths, by necessity or choice, to seek a home in Gaul, which country they occupied in common with the Vandals, the Suevi, the Alani, and other more obscure, but not less formidable, barbarians; and scarcely had the division of the empire between Arcadius and Honorius been effected in the first years of the fifth century, when the inhabitants of Spain, either through treason or from the negligence of the garrisons stationed in the passes of the Pyrenees, were overwhelmed by a deluge of savage marauders.

For four hundred years, the beautiful, the rich, the fertile and densely populated Peninsula had enjoyed the inestimable blessings of peace. With the defeat and death of the sons of Pompey, the last vestige of civil war and intestine discord had disappeared from its borders. Its fields were cultivated with assiduous care; its seaports were thronged with the shipping of the Mediterranean; the manufacturing interests of its inland cities were diversified and important. Its people, who had inherited from Rome and Carthage that love of pleasure which was at once their boast and their disgrace, with Epicurean unconcern, lived only for the present, in the participation of all the luxury which boundless wealth and national prosperity could bestow. Upon this earthly paradise—with its splendid cities, its sumptuous villas, its majestic souvenirs of Roman greatness, its traditions of heroic achievement and maritime adventure; where Hannibal had gained his boyhood's laurels, and Cæsar, moved by the sight of Alexander's statue, had first aspired to the dominion of the world—now descended the brutal and licentious plunderers of the North. The excesses perpetrated by them in other provinces of the empire were trivial when compared with the havoc they committed in Iberia. No considerations of public policy, no sentiments of mercy, interposed to mitigate the calamities which befell the smiling plains of the Anas, the Iberus, and the Bætis. Such of the inhabitants as were fortunate enough to find an asylum behind the walls of fortified cities, soon paid for their temporary security with the pangs of famine. The growing crops, delivered to the torch, left to-day a blackened waste where only yesterday had been every promise of an abundant harvest. A smoky pall, appropriate symbol of destruction, overhung the sites of prosperous hamlets and marble villas, where a few smouldering embers alone indicated the former abode of taste and opulence. Heaps of corpses, denied the rites of sepulture, covered the land, which was infested with incredible numbers of wolves and birds of prey, attracted from every side to their loathsome and inexhaustible repast. A feeling of utter despair fell upon the survivors; the instincts of humanity and the feelings of nature were suspended or destroyed; men murdered their families and then committed suicide; women devoured their offspring; exposure, want, suffering, and anxiety produced their inevitable consequences; and the crowning misfortune, the pestilence, daily claimed its victims by thousands. The savage masters of the country, satiated with rapine and mutually jealous of power, now began to quarrel with each other. In the contests which ensued, almost from the first, the superior organization and martial genius of the Goths acquired for them the acknowledged supremacy over their adversaries—a supremacy which soon became coextensive with the Peninsula and laid the foundations of an extensive kingdom. Early in the fifth century the extermination, expulsion, or absorption by intermarriage, of the various tribes, and the emigration of the Vandals, in a body, to Africa, gave the control of the entire country, with the exception of a few seaports still tributary to Constantinople, to the Visigoths. In political organization, in nomenclature, in the construction and in the application of the maxims of jurisprudence, in the election of their rulers, in the punishment of criminals, in the regulation of their amusements, they observed the traditions and honored the observances of their old homes on the Vistula and the Baltic. The accident of conversion, a matter of indifference to the majority of the nation, and one, in this instance, partially dependent upon policy, had made them Arians, and consequently heretics. The Gothic Church, in its independence of the See of Rome, while it honored the Supreme Pontiff, and recognized, to a certain extent, the religious supremacy of the Papacy, presented an anomaly in the Christian world. The monarch chosen for his wisdom or his bravery had not as yet assumed the exterior insignia of royalty, and the laws held him to a strict accountability for the lives and property of his subjects, but in ecclesiastical affairs his authority was undisputed and supreme. He convoked at his pleasure and presided over the national councils—assemblies originally composed entirely of the clergy, and in which, at all times, the theocratical element largely preponderated; he published encyclical letters; he possessed the power of revising the decrees of councils before their adoption and promulgation; and his wishes and suggestions were received with a respect surpassing that usually accorded by his haughty vassals to the majesty of the throne. The clergy were in fact absolutely dependent upon the sovereign; their immunities were subject to his will or his caprice; and, far from enjoying the exemption they obtained in after times by reason of their sacred office and superior sanctity, they were liable to taxation, and amenable to punishment for the violation of the laws as strictly as were the laity. Not only were these restrictions imposed upon them, but the interests of the secular portion of the community were carefully guarded against the possible encroachments of ecclesiastical tyranny; the judges were particularly enjoined to scrutinize the conduct of the priesthood; and instances were by no means rare where heavy fines were imposed upon them for acts of injustice and for the oppression of their parishioners. From the decision of every bishop and metropolitan an appeal lay to the throne, a privilege conceded to the meanest peasant; the king could suspend or abrogate the rules of ecclesiastical discipline; no canon was valid without his sanction; and he assumed the rights of nominating, and of translating from one see to another, the greatest prelates of the Church. But as assemblies of men who possess a monopoly of the learning and worldly wisdom of a nation, conscious of mental superiority and incited by motives of ambition, are never satisfied with acting in a subordinate capacity; the ecclesiastical councils of Spain almost imperceptibly, but none the less surely, began to encroach upon the royal prerogative, and, assisted by the weakness or gratitude of princes whose titles had been assured by their confirmation, aimed at the seizure of absolute power. By the institution of the rite of anointing, which imparted a sacred character to the monarch, and invested in them an implied control over his coronation—a rite first used in Spain and not adopted in France till the reign of Pepin, in the eighth century; by the framing of laws favorable to their order, and whose essential provisions were carefully disguised under the specious name of enactments for the public welfare; by a command of a majority of the votes which elected the sovereign; and lastly, by the conversion of the whole nation to the doctrines of the orthodox faith; the Gothic clergy advanced unswervingly towards the establishment of their claim to political supremacy. The Third Council of Toledo was the first of these important convocations in which questions relating to the settlement of the constitution of the Gothic monarchy were debated and settled. From this time until the meeting of the Eighth Council in 653, the palatines did not participate in the deliberations of these assemblies, which now began to assume the appearance of legislative bodies, in which the aims of exclusive ecclesiastical representation were already clearly disclosed by the partiality and exemptions which characterized the canons treating of the rights and privileges of the priesthood. After the middle of the seventh century, although the nobles were admitted as members of the national councils and took part in their discussions, the influence of the clergy became paramount, and the duties of the nobility were confined to a passive assent to, and registration of, their edicts. A separate tribunal for the final adjudication of all disputed points of doctrine which might incidentally arise in the ordinary administration of justice was granted to ecclesiastics; the latter were prohibited from engaging in commerce, which the poverty of the Church had formerly rendered necessary; it became customary to select bishops for the negotiation of treaties, and for the direction of military embassies which were invested with the all-important powers of peace and war; the councils occasionally claimed jurisdiction over secular causes—an unwarranted assumption of power which the indifference or bigotry of the sovereign usually failed to resent; and the intolerant character of the canons treating of heresy indicate, but too plainly, the growing spirit of persecution—the germ of future inquisitorial atrocities.

But, notwithstanding the acceptance of Catholicism, and the consequent advance towards the enjoyment of absolute independence, the Church was hampered by many serious restrictions. Bishops, clerks, and monks remained subordinate to the secular arm and responsible to the courts of the realm; they could not, with impunity, disregard their processes, still less defy their authority; and the commission of crime rendered them liable to heavy fines and long terms of imprisonment; although, like the nobility, they could not be subjected to the punishments inflicted upon the lower orders, such as scourging and branding—the latter being considered especially infamous. The immunity which subsequently attached to the character of the clergy as non-combatants was not known to the founders of the Gothic monarchy. When a city was besieged or the country threatened with invasion, every subject, regardless of his profession, was obliged to serve in the army, and no ecclesiastic could plead his sacred office in bar of military duty to his sovereign, under penalty of confiscation and exile; the tonsure was regarded as of peculiar significance and sanctity, and any one whose locks had once been shorn, or who had assumed the clerical habit, was henceforth excluded, as a rule, from all military and civil employments, and consecrated for life to the service of the cloister; a law which, when abused by fraud or ignorance, was more than once productive of important results, and even of changes in the royal succession. Upon the whole, however, the influence of the Church in those days of intellectual darkness was highly beneficial. Its monopoly of the scanty wisdom of the time was often employed for the protection of the oppressed, for the alleviation of suffering, for the frustration of tyranny, for the consolation of death. The bishop stood as a guard between the helpless peasant and the unjust judge; his mediation with the throne, in cases of flagrant injury, was not optional but mandatory; and his official conduct was subject to the constant supervision, and was liable to the censure, of the magistrate. The ambition and political aspirations of the clergy, joined to their insatiable greed of dominion, which increased with each successive encroachment upon the civil power, with the daily accumulation of wealth, and the acquisition of extensive estates by gift, extortion, bequest, or purchase, disclosed themselves in time in their legitimate consequence, religious intolerance. The Arian Church in Spain never disgraced its rule by persecution for differences of opinion. With the acceptance of the orthodox belief in the sixth century, however, the spirit of vindictive malevolence, which has always animated and directed the genius of Catholicism when in the ascendant, at once infected the counsels of the ecclesiastical tribunals, and indirectly, through their influence and example, the decisions of the courts of law. The coronation oath rendered obligatory the expulsion of all heretics without consideration of birth, position, or previous service to the state. The Jews, in whom were vested the most important offices, and who possessed the bulk of the wealth of the kingdom, were banished, imprisoned, plundered, or burnt; and while it is true that the severity of the laws against this sect defeated, erelong, the object of their enactment, even their partial enforcement was the cause of great and wide-spread suffering. With the consciousness of power came the increase of pomp and the desire for prohibited enjoyments and indulgence in carnal pleasures wholly inconsistent with the observance of the vows of poverty and chastity as well as contrary to the rules of ecclesiastical discipline. The canons enacted from time to time by the councils, and whose provisions were designed to impose restraints upon the irregular conduct of the clergy, show, more conclusively than the pages of any chronicle, the lax morality and deplorable condition of the religious society of that age. Stringent regulations were adopted against the acceptance of bribes as the price of exemption from persecution—especially referring to the Jews—a proof that the zealous protestations of the clerical order could not withstand the pecuniary arguments of the astute Hebrew; while the censures fulminated against priests and monks who abused the privileges of the confessional, or violated nature in the commission of revolting crimes, indicate the secret and universal corruption which had already begun to pollute the sacred offices of the Church and impair the usefulness of its ministers. The Eighteenth Council of Toledo, at the dictation of King Witiza, whose profligate conduct and contempt for religion had aroused the horror of Christendom and provoked the anathemas of the Pope, had, with unexampled servility, passed laws authorizing the marriage of ecclesiastics, the institution of polygamy, and the practice of promiscuous concubinage. Under these conditions of sacerdotal degradation, sanctioned by custom and established by law, the influence of the Church was everywhere diminished; the faith of men in the existing religion was weakened; and the public mind was insensibly prepared for the new revelation which, appealing to the strongest passions of the human breast, stripped of metaphysical distinctions, and inculcating moral precepts such as the most skeptical and dissolute must applaud, was soon to be published to the discontented and priest-ridden subjects of the Gothic empire. The ill-defined powers of the Crown and the Mitre, at first reciprocally dependent, led eventually to a clashing of interests and a struggle for precedence between the royal and the sacerdotal authority, in which the clergy, though their aspirations were occasionally checked by some monarch of stern and decided character, in the end invariably obtained the advantage. The dependence of the sovereign upon the priesthood was never lost sight of. No occasion which might remind him of the obligation he owed to the order whose suffrages had conferred, and might, with equal facility, resume possession of his crown, was suffered to pass unimproved. The anointing with holy oil, which symbolized the right of divine consecration, had already forged another link in the chain which bound the king to the Church. The anathemas denounced upon a prince for failure to execute the laws against heretics, far exceeded in virulence those to which any subject was liable. At one time, the wishes of the sovereign were anticipated by the subserviency of the prelates; at another, his prerogative was invaded and his commands disobeyed with an arrogance worthy of the imperious spirit of Julius II. or of Gregory the Great. The populace, through ignorance, prejudice, and habit, blindly devoted to the sacerdotal order, furnished a formidable body of auxiliaries, ever ready to hearken to the appeals of their ghostly advisers, a force which the dignity and assurance of the haughtiest ruler could not with impunity disregard. The turbulent and illiterate nobility, although the king was selected from their number by the voices of the assembled bishops—in which ceremony the concurrence of the palatines was admitted, in reality, only through courtesy—possessed, in the practical application of the precepts of the Gothic constitution, scarcely the shadow, still less the substance, of power. The council was the embodiment and representative of the intellect and the collective wisdom of the nation. Its canons were, for the most part, framed in strict accordance with the principles of equity, and the deliberations and conclusions of its sessions were often characterized by a breadth of understanding and a degree of impartiality which clearly indicated that its members were not deficient in the knowledge and requirements of enlightened statesmanship. The results of their labors are contained in the Gothic Code, a body of laws remarkable in many respects, when we consider the general illiteracy and ignorance of the age in which it was compiled, and its transcendent importance as the prototype of the systems of jurisprudence which now regulate the civil and criminal procedure of the courts of Europe and America. In the extraordinary minuteness of its details, in its thorough and comprehensive treatment of the manifold transactions of daily life, and in its provisions for almost every contingency which could arise in the administration of the sovereigns under whose auspices it was framed, this extraordinary work presents the modern legislator with a subject eminently worthy of his attention and study. The contact with races which had long enjoyed the blessings of civilization, and the development of the intellectual faculties consequent upon the experience obtained in frequent expeditions and protracted campaigns, imperceptibly modified the ancient laws of the Goths; the very essence of which was, from the first, and long continued to be, the assertion of the principle of personal liberty. Rome, whose toleration of the religious prejudices and customs of the nations subjected to her dominion—so long as they did not conflict with her interests or contravene her authority—was one great secret of her power, had, in accordance with that policy, indulged the Iberians in the use of their own laws, and only those who enjoyed the privileges of citizenship could be summoned before the tribunal of the imperial magistrate. The incursions of the barbarians had abolished every restraint, and transformed the previous quiet and peaceful condition of the Peninsula into a state of anarchy. There was then no law but the will of the chieftain, who was inclined to encourage, rather than to repress, the excesses of a brutalized soldiery. All records and muniments of title had disappeared; boundaries had ceased to exist; the tenure of lands was entirely dependent upon the numerical strength of the claimants; and when the fields of one district were exhausted, the discontented settlers sought a new residence in another locality, whose wealth had excited their avarice, and the inferior military resources of whose occupants rendered the retention of their possessions uncertain. The cessation of hostilities was always accompanied with the plunder and impoverishment of the vanquished; no treaty was valid, because no moral obligation, or superior power by which it could be enforced, existed; every vice was committed with impunity; every grudge was satisfied with all the abuse of unrestricted license; the caprice of the military commander had supplanted the precedents of the prætor, and the sword had become the only acknowledged arbiter of every controversy.

During the reign of Euric, in the year 479, was codified and published the first book of Gothic law, the basis of the subsequent complex and exhaustive system of jurisprudence which increased in size, and gathered reverence and authority with the reign of each succeeding sovereign. It was known as the Forum Judicum, or the Book of Judges, and consisted mainly of a compilation of the rules applicable to the various customs and ordeals, which had been approved by time and experience as beneficial in the administration of the government of the Gothic nation, combined with such maxims of Roman law as had gradually been absorbed through frequent association with the courts and magistrates of the empire. The new rights and duties arising from the acceptance by the Goths of the orthodox belief in the latter half of the sixth century, necessitated a revision of the existing laws and the formulation of another code of far more extensive scope than the one which already existed. By certain provisions of the former the constitution of the Iberian church was definitely established and the predominance of the clergy in secular matters assured; measures of portentous significance, whose evil effects upon the intelligence and prosperity of the Spanish people are discernible even in our day. From the date of its adoption and promulgation, the inhabitants of the

Peninsula were, without exception, declared subject to its statutes. From this time dates the absolute supremacy of the Church in the Peninsula. The hold which it then obtained upon temporal affairs it has never relaxed. The awful consequences of that supremacy upon all classes and conditions of men owing allegiance to the Spanish crown are familiar to every reader of history.

The Visigothic Code exhibited, in the restrictions it imposed upon the royal prerogative, that spirit of jealous independence always conspicuous in the character of the German warrior, and which had been preserved through many centuries by the importance that distinguished the privileged orders under an elective monarchy. The king, who, at first, had been liable to censure and judgment by his subjects, was informed, when invested with his office, that even its dignity could not exempt him from the obligation to observe the law, a principle of justice and equality which he shared with every resident in his dominions. The authority of the turbulent and illiterate nobles, who, with all the arrogance of power, did not hesitate to threaten and insult the creature of their choice, was curbed in time by the potent yet gentle influence of the clergy, whose learning and talents at first swayed, and finally absolutely controlled, the deliberations of the National Councils. The high rank of the prelates, their superior accomplishments in an age of universal ignorance, and their claims as members of an independent hierarchy, which even the Supreme Pontiff himself scarcely ventured to contradict, in the end communicated to the Visigothic constitution all the worst characteristics of an irresponsible and intolerant theocracy.

The Forum Judicum consists of twelve books, which not only define the rights of the different classes of society, but prescribe at length, and in copious detail, the mode of procedure to be followed in the various tribunals. Every precaution which ingenuity could devise was adopted to insure the fidelity, the honesty, and the impartiality of the magistrate, whether of the civil or the ecclesiastical order. It was the duty of the judge to observe and report upon the decisions of the bishop and the priest, while, on the other hand, the higher clergy possessed, under certain contingencies, the power of examining causes and rendering judgment when the proper official had refused or neglected to exercise his judicial functions, and the interests of either of the parties litigant were exposed to injury in consequence. The courts were open from dawn to dark, and the period of vacation and the hours of rest were strictly regulated by law. The trial of causes could not be delayed except for valid reasons; the speedy rendition of judgment was compulsory; the procrastination, injustice, or corruption of the judge was punished by a fine amounting to double the loss incurred, and when the circumstances were peculiarly aggravating his property was confiscated and he was publicly sold as a slave. No person, however indigent, was debarred, for that reason, from the benefits of justice, and a fund was set apart in every town for the support of impecunious litigants, which was disbursed by the municipal government with the approval of the bishop. An appeal from the decisions of the inferior tribunals was granted as a matter of unquestionable right, and the slightest suspicion of interference by the throne in the proceedings rendered them invalid and worthless. The ceremonies relating to the administration of the law were characterized by great simplicity, and the pleadings were divested of unnecessary verbiage. The highest reverence for the officers of the crown was inculcated and enforced; and a resort to litigation was persistently discouraged by public opinion, excepting where it was imperatively demanded by the interests of justice. In the rules of evidence, as well as in their application, traces of the deeply rooted superstitions of the Teutonic barbarians still remained. The ordeals of fire and water were not infrequently adopted. The wager of battle could not be refused, without ignominy; and the oaths of compurgators were, at times, invoked to restore the lustre of some tarnished escutcheon, or to remove the stain attaching to a suspected violation of female honor. Torture was allowed, but excessive severity in its application was prohibited, and, in case of death or permanent injury resulting from its abuse, the judge was liable to forfeiture both of his possessions and his liberty. In determining the competency of testimony, an unwise and unjust discrimination was made against the poor, through the unwarrantable presumption of temptation to bribery, and this exclusion also applied to Jews—even though apostates—as well as to their descendants, and to slaves. The crime of perjury was mentioned with horror; its commission was deemed worthy of the severest punishment; and the false witness, visited with public execration, was condemned to life-long servitude. In general, the criminal code of the Visigoths was conspicuous for the moderation with which it treated offenders against the public peace. The penalty of death was rarely inflicted, and was confined to cases of arson, rape, and murder. A regular schedule of minor crimes and their punishments existed; the severity of the latter depending upon the social rank and political importance of the individual. In flagrant instances of malicious prosecution, bribery of public officers, or abuse of political power, the culprit became the slave of the injured party, with the sole limitation to his resentment, that the life of his former oppressor should be spared. Rebellion was punished by banishment; infanticide by blinding; and the counterfeiter, or the forger of a royal edict, suffered the loss of the right hand. When the atrocious nature of an offence against morals demanded a penalty of corresponding infamy, the head of the criminal was shaved and branded, marking him for life as a social outcast, to be forever an object of public abhorrence. Scourging was the penalty of most universal application, and even a freeman, however exalted his station, was not exempt from its infliction, if he ventured to provoke the vengeance of retributive justice, and was not possessed of the stated fine which was the legal equivalent of the lash. The right of asylum, a privilege whose importance as a salutary check upon the passions of a fierce and tyrannical nobility, in an age of violence, is with difficulty appreciated in modern times, was recognized by the Gothic constitution; and no suppliant, who had sought protection at the foot of the altar, could be removed without the consent of the proper ecclesiastical authority. In the provisions which define the civil relations of society, the Forum Judicum recalls to every one conversant with the Commentaries of Blackstone, the familiar maxims and precedents of the Common Law of England. The different grades of relationship, and the rights of inheritance in the ascending and descending lines, were treated of exhaustively in the books of the Visigothic Code. In the protection of the interests of children its sections displayed a paternal and anxious care. No child could be disinherited unless it had been guilty of some aggravated act of violence towards its parent. In all questions relating to the descent of property, no preference was accorded to sex, and the female remained on the same footing as the male. A minor of ten years could, without restriction, dispose of his or her possessions by will. Guardians were appointed by the courts, who were required to observe the conditions of their trust, and to render accounts of the funds which passed through their hands; and the power of appointing a guardian *ad litem* was frequently exercised, where the affairs of a minor necessitated the institution or the defence of a suit at law. The boundless control of the father over the child, which formed so prominent a feature in the domestic regulations of Rome, was repugnant to the independent spirit of the Goths; the parental duties and responsibilities were expressly defined; the son who resided with his father was entitled to two-thirds of his earnings; and the courts exercised unremitting and vigilant supervision over the persons and estates of minors and orphans. A reminiscence of the ancient custom of marriage by purchase survived in the price paid by the bridegroom to the relatives of the bride; all clandestine alliances were considered invalid; a woman could sue, and be sued, without joining with her husband; and no responsibility attached to either for the illegal acts of the other. Integrity of descent and purity of blood were preserved by laws of exceptional severity; a free-born female who abandoned her person to, or even contracted marriage with, a slave was scourged and burnt with her unfortunate paramour or spouse. A wife who had incurred the guilt of adultery was delivered over absolutely to the tender mercies of the injured husband. This offence, which evoked ordinarily the strongest denunciation from the descendants of the cold and sluggish barbarians of the Baltic, was, however, in an ecclesiastic rather reprobated as an amiable weakness than condemned as a crime; an indulgence to be attributed partly to the predominant and sympathetic caste of the legislature, and partly to an appreciation of the opportunities and temptations which beset the father-confessor, who, after conviction, was immured in some comfortable monastery until he professed penitence and received absolution.

The conditions of vassalage and serfdom, as understood and practised elsewhere in Europe, and especially in Germany, were foreign to the polity of the Visigoths. Feudalism, with its mutual rights and obligations as subsequently known to Europe, strictly speaking, did not exist. The relations affecting the status of lord and vassal were, to some extent, borrowed from the Roman system and modelled upon those of patron and client. The sections relating to the conditions of servitude were minute and voluminous. The master had generally unrestricted power over the life of his slave. He who aided the escape of the latter was legally responsible for his value. Recognizing the peculiar facilities for criminal intercourse, and the corresponding difficulty of its detection, the law sentenced the servile adulterer to the stake. While the most liberal encouragement was given to the manumission of slaves, the numbers of this unfortunate class were constantly increasing, by the capture of prisoners of war, by the degradation of dishonest officials, by the submission of debtors, and by the conviction of criminals. Every slave belonged to a certain rank, and castigation for petty delinquencies, as well as punishment for serious crimes, was inflicted with more or less rigor, according to the cause of his servitude, his industrial ability, and the social condition of his owner, whether he was born, purchased, or condemned; whether he was a skilful artisan or mechanic, or an ordinary laborer; or whether he was the property of the Crown, of the Church, or of an individual. The influence of the Visigoths did much to lighten the burdens of slavery; the bloody spectacles of the gladiatorial contests possessed no allurements for a nation not degraded by cowardice and cruelty; the treatment of bondmen was, in some localities, so softened and modified that scarcely more than the name of hereditary servitude existed; and in cases of intolerable oppression, where the slave took refuge in the sanctuary, the master could be compelled to dispose of him to some one more actuated by feelings of kindness and pity.

The precepts of the Forum Judicum which relate to bailments, to strays, to trespass, to accessories before and after the fact, to the obstruction of highways, to malicious mischief, to the attestation of documents, and to contracts made under duress, are substantially the same as those set forth in our law-books of to-day. A statute of limitations, which recognized a period varying from thirty to fifty years, beyond which even some criminal prosecutions could not be instituted, was in force. The legislation pertaining to agriculture, irrigation, and the boundaries of land was particularly complete and exhaustive. Security was obtained by bonds and pledges; inventories were required of guardians; and the culprit who was guilty of slander was not only responsible in damages for his intemperate language, but was also often liable to corporeal punishment; as, for instance, if he called another a "Saracen," or even insinuated that he had been circumcised, he might consider himself fortunate if he did not receive fifty lashes at the hands of the common executioner.

Considering the general condition of society, the antecedents of a nation whose energies had hitherto been directed to the overthrow of every institution which secured the perpetuity of peace and order, the previous slender opportunities of its authors, and the limited educational facilities at their command, the Code of the Visigoths presents us with a system of legislation of extraordinary interest and value. So remarkable is this body of jurisprudence in the wisdom, foresight, humanity, and knowledge of mankind which characterize its leading maxims, that they almost seem to have been suggested by divine inspiration. Its first statutes appeared when the comprehensive system of Justinian, which had enlisted the talents and exhausted the erudition of the most accomplished jurists of the Eastern Empire, was nearly perfected. It borrowed but little, however, from the learning of Tribonian and the laborious ingenuity of his seventeen coadjutors. The eternal principles of justice, it is true, are equally the basis of both of these collections; but their construction and the methods of their application, under similar conditions, are widely different; and the superiority, upon the whole, is largely on the side of the so-called barbarian. In the majority of instances, excepting where ecclesiastical ambition and monastic prejudice perverted the ends of legislation, the laws of the Visigoths were uniformly framed for the protection of the weak, the relief of the oppressed, and the general welfare of society. Unlike the practice of more civilized nations in comparatively recent times, the judicature of the former confined its penalties to the personality of the offender, and imposed no disabilities, either by forfeiture or attainder, upon his innocent relatives and descendants. It restrained the tyranny of the monarch; it defined with conciseness and accuracy the rights of the subject; it accorded unprecedented concessions to the widow and the orphan; it respected the unfortunate and helpless condition of the slave. It prohibited encroachments upon personal liberty, and declared the sale of a freeman to be equivalent in atrocity to the crime of homicide. In almost every provision which did not conflict with the claims of the priesthood, it hearkened to the voice of mercy and humanity. By the constant menace and certain infliction of civil degradation, confiscation, and perpetual servitude, it secured the fidelity of the judges and fiscal officers of the state. It accepted the great principle of the Salic law, and, with worldly prudence, forbade the election of a female sovereign. But, when the theocratic influence which pervaded every branch of the Gothic constitution comes to be examined, its effect upon contemporaneous legislation is seen to be pernicious and deplorable. The power of the clergy was irresponsible, ubiquitous, and thoroughly despotic. It dictated the proceedings of every assembly. It whispered suggestions of questionable morality in the ears of the monarch. When thwarted in its unholy aims, its vengeance was implacable. The abuse of the convenient and formidable weapon of excommunication had not reached the extreme which it subsequently attained, yet the all but omnipotent hand of the priesthood was already able to invade the privacy of domestic life, to interfere with the sensitive and delicate mechanism of commerce, to violate the rights of property, to desecrate the sacred precincts of the grave. Ecclesiastical intolerance dictated the passage of ex-post-facto laws, a measure whose monstrous injustice is patent to every unprejudiced mind. The disability imposed upon the Hebrew race, and the savage spirit of the canons enacted for its oppression, point significantly to the prospective horrors of the inquisitorial tribunals. The practice of sorcery and magic—so dreaded in an age of intellectual inferiority, and especially offensive to the Church, which tolerated no wonder-workers outside of its own pale—was severely reprobated, and punished with excessive severity. The ends of the clergy, when not obtainable by the arts of controversy, were secured by other means not unfamiliar to the intriguing courtiers of mediæval Europe; its propositions were advanced with caution and debated with consummate skill; and its arguments were either insinuated with more than Jesuitical adroitness, or urged with all the energy of sacerdotal zeal.

In its respectable antiquity; in the sublime morality inculcated by its precepts; in the obligations incurred by every nation which has drawn upon its accumulated stores of wisdom; in its freedom from the dishonorable expedients of legal chicanery; in the simplicity of its procedure; in the certainty and celerity required by the practice of the tribunals where its authority was acknowledged; in the inflexible impartiality with which it invested the decisions of those tribunals; in its well-founded title to public confidence; the Visigothic Code is without parallel in the annals of jurisprudence. But great as are its claims upon the gratitude and reverence of the jurist and the legislator, they are scarcely comparable to the indebtedness imposed upon the historian. The meagre information to be gleaned from the works of native chroniclers is, in great measure, thoroughly unreliable. The literature of the age, scanty in itself, consists mainly of the recital of ecclesiastical fables, the martyrdom of legendary saints, the discovery of spurious relics, the averting of calamities by invocation and miracle, and trivial incidents in the lives of holy men and women, whose preternatural gifts the indulgent credulity of their biographers has handed down to the contempt and ridicule of posterity. The pages destined for such records were too precious to be defiled by the accounts of wars and insurrections and the interesting descriptions of mediæval society. The diligence of the compilers of the Forum Judicum has, however, largely supplied the deficiencies of the monkish annalists. In their various civil and prohibitory enactments, they have unconsciously delineated the follies, the vices, the superstitions, and the crimes of the age. The penalties imposed for the violation of statutes denote infallibly the barbarian origin of those who formulated them. The law of retaliation—tolerated only among the lowest races of men—occurs repeatedly among the provisions of the Visigothic Code. The deterrent effect of criminal legislation was almost always subordinated to considerations of vengeance. The magistrate was regarded as the vindicator of wrong, rather than the calm representative of judicial dignity and the impartial interpreter of the laws. Scalping, maiming, blinding, scourging, branding, emasculation, were punishments prescribed without discrimination, for offences varying widely in the nature and degree of misconduct and criminality. The period of transition which separated the barbaric rudeness of Adolphus and the effeminate luxury of Roderick is traceable, step by step, in the progressive legislation of centuries. The rise and consolidation of ecclesiastical power; the limitation of the royal prerogative; the decline of the insolent pretensions of the nobility; the elevation of the peasant from the position of a beast of burden to a self-respecting being, who, however steeped in ignorance he might be, was always sure of an impartial hearing before the magistrate; are there related with all the fidelity and minuteness of a chronicle. There too are depicted the sources of that inspiration which animated and sustained the sinking hopes of the founders of the Spanish monarchy, from its organization as a little principality in the Asturias, down through the turbulent era of Moorish domination, until it attained the summit of greatness as the dictator of Europe and the arbiter of Christendom. These are the general characteristics of that incomparable monument of jurisprudence whose noble conceptions of the ends of legislation are best expressed in its own concise and energetic language:

"The law is the rival of divinity, the messenger of justice, and the guide of life. It dominates all classes of the state, and all ages of humanity, male and female, the young and the old, the wise and the ignorant, the noble and the peasant. It is not designed for the promotion of private aims, but to shelter and protect the general interests of all. It must adjust itself to time and place, according to the condition of affairs and the customs of the realm, and confine itself to exact and equitable rules so as not to lay snares for any citizen."

Lost in the confusion attending the Conquest, the Forum Judicum was carefully preserved by the Moors for the benefit of future generations; and, recovered when the Moslem capital was taken by St. Ferdinand, it was subsequently translated into Castilian.

Among the nations composing the heterogeneous population of Spain, the most important in intelligence, wealth, commercial activity, and talent for administration, in ancient times, were the Jews. Classed with the first colonists of the Peninsula, the earliest mention of Iberia by the Greek and Roman historians represents the Jewish population as already rich and prosperous. If we consider their intimate relations, kindred interests, alliances by marriage, and common inclination for traffic, with their Tyrian neighbors, it is not improbable that the settlement of the Hebrew in Bætica was coincident with that of the Phœnicians. The first National Council that assembled at Illiberis in 325—the same year in which were determined the principles of orthodox Christianity as set forth in the Nicene creed—inaugurated the long and bloody persecution which finally culminated in the wholesale expulsion of the unfortunate race by Philip V. By the canons of this council, the blessings of the rabbi, to which the husbandman seemed to attach a virtue and an importance equal if not superior to those presumed to attend the benediction of the priest, and which custom from time immemorial had invoked upon the growing crops, was declared an offence against religion, punishable by summary expulsion from the Church. The morose spirit of ecclesiastical bigotry did not hesitate to violate the rites of hospitality and cast a shadow over the amenities of social life. With an exquisite refinement of malice, it pronounced subject to excommunication all who, even in cases of charity or under circumstances of the most urgent necessity, shared their food with a Jew. The passive submission of the entire race to the barbarian invader procured, however, for its members, in many instances, a degree of consideration not enjoyed by their Christian neighbors. With their natural talents for business, their capacity for intrigue, and, above all, their superior knowledge of mankind, they were not long in securing the confidence of the conquerors. Under the Arian sovereigns, their religious opinions remained for generations unquestioned, and their worship unmolested. But hardly had the nation renounced its ancient communion, before the disturbing spirit of the new hierarchy began to assert itself. The edict of Sisebut, in 612, published the decrees of the Third Council of Toledo which had been drawn up for the pious purpose of "eradicating the perfidy of the Jews," whose general prosperity and political power had aroused the apprehensions of the priesthood. From this era until the accession of Roderick in 709, the legislation of the councils relating to the Jews presents the extremes of brutal harshness and occasional liberal indulgence. In all these enactments, however, the offensive qualities of injustice and malevolence largely preponderated. The aggressiveness of Catholicism demanded instant and uncompromising submission to its creed. What was at first attempted by the imposition of civil disabilities was soon after exacted by degrading insults, by torture, by slavery, and by death. Such was the unrelenting ferocity of this persecution that it awakened at times the indignation even of a semi-barbarous and fanatical age. But despite continuous and systematic repression, this maligned and down-trodden race prospered; the forbearance of royal and ecclesiastical inquisitors was purchased, and the clamors of furious zealots were silenced by opportune contributions to the monastic orders; for the services of the most capable diplomatists and financiers of the time could not be dispensed with in a society where even a large portion of those who devised measures for their oppression could neither read nor write. The superiority of the Jews was also indicated by the prices they commanded when their liberty had been forfeited by law. While slaves of other nationalities ranked as "bestias de cuatro pies," and were purchasable upon the same terms as a horse or an ox, the Jew was worth a thousand crowns. The great possessions of the Gothic nobles, which the universal illiteracy of the latter made them incompetent to manage, rendered the shrewd and accomplished Hebrew a necessary steward. He enjoyed the confidence of the monarch. He administered the royal revenues, always with discernment and in most instances with fidelity. His advice was eagerly solicited in exigencies of national importance, and in the crooked arts of diplomacy he proved more than a match for the ablest negotiators of the age. His wealth, his political and social influence, which he preserved in defiance of civil disabilities and ecclesiastical malice, his scholastic attainments, the elegance of his manners when contrasted with Teutonic rudeness; all of these qualities ingratiated him into the favor of the palatines, by whom he was often treated with the consideration deserved by a friend, rather than with the abhorrence due to an outcast.

The political organization and legal privileges which the Jews possessed in the early days of the Visigothic monarchy magnified their importance, increased their wealth, and fostered their spirit of exclusiveness. The latter feeling was also strengthened by the policy of separation which it was deemed expedient to adopt, during the Middle Ages, in Christian communities, towards the Hebrew race. For a considerable period of the Gothic dominion, the Jews were confined to a certain quarter of every city and village, over which magistrates of their own blood exercised both civil and criminal functions, unrestricted, save in questions that affected the national faith or where personal injury had been inflicted upon a Christian. The jurisdiction of each provincial assembly was rigidly subordinated to the supreme authority of the central synagogue. The territory beyond the limits of the town—which was often entirely Jewish—was subject to the control of a governor who was responsible only to the sovereign. At one time the Jews controlled the most important landed interests of the kingdom. The prejudice attaching to payments for the use of money did not deter the Hebrew banker from the practice of usury, although the legal rate of thirty-three per cent. certainly offered sufficient inducements to abstain from the violation of the law which he either secretly evaded or openly defied.

The activity displayed by the Jews of the Peninsula in every department of science, literature, government, commerce, agriculture, and finance was incessant and indefatigable. No contemporaneous people could boast, in proportion to their numbers, so many men of genius and erudition. Their influence was so extensive that it was acknowledged alike in the hovel of the peasant and in the council chamber of the king. Their powerful individuality survived the cruel impositions which repressed their enterprise, but could not damp their ardor; and the patriotism which attached them to a country in which they were only tolerated as exiles, was sufficient to induce their descendants to heartily aid, by every means in their power, the famous princes and warriors whose capacity and resolution supported, amidst continuous disaster and defeat, the doubtful fortunes of the struggling monarchy of Castile.

In their application to the mechanical arts, and in their development of architecture, the Visigoths disclosed rather an imitative faculty than a spirit of marked originality. What is known to us as the Gothic style owes nothing to that nation to which popular belief has ascribed its invention, and, in fact, was not introduced into Spain until the thirteenth century. The name has been arbitrarily given it to distinguish the pointed arch—its principal characteristic—from the rounded one peculiar to the edifices of Rome. The rude and primitive structures of the German forests, constructed of logs, stained with mud, and designed solely for purposes of shelter and defence, could neither suggest nor transmit traditions of architectural elegance and beauty. The sight of the noble memorials of Roman genius which had escaped the destructive impulses of the predatory barbarian, erelong inspired the uncouth conqueror with the spirit of emulation. In the Iberian Peninsula these vast and splendid structures abounded. The walls which once encompassed the seats of its proconsul; the fanes from whence had arisen the incense to its gods; the colonnades which adorned its capitals; the aqueducts rising to prodigious heights, and surmounting difficulties which would have perplexed any engineer save a Roman, were worthy of one of the richest provinces of the empire. From such models the Visigothic architect, wholly destitute of experience, yet animated by the desire of imitating an excellence which had awakened his admiration, designed the palace and the basilica. The wealth which, from the earliest times, Spain has lavished upon her children, furnished the means, while the religious spirit which pervaded every class of society afforded the incentive, for public display and private munificence. An innumerable body of slaves and dependents, available at a moment's notice, facilitated the rapid construction of edifices of the largest proportions. Churches grand in dimensions and barbaric in decoration were erected by priests, abbots, and private individuals, whose generosity was commensurate with their devotion. Before the shrines of these temples were deposited vases, reliquaries, diptychs, crosses, of precious materials and curiously intricate patterns. The religious enthusiasm of the Gothic princes, mingled perhaps with a certain share of worldly ambition, impelled them to a generous rivalry, and nourished in the bosom of each the desire to surpass his predecessor in liberality to the Church. Hence the various temples were, under each successive reign, enriched with royal gifts of inestimable value and ostentatious magnificence. Sacramental tables of gold studded with emeralds, diamonds, and sapphires, whose wondrous beauty and richness Saracen tradition has transmitted to posterity, with monstrances and ciboria of ingenious design and encrusted with jewels, formed a portion of the pious donations of the sovereigns of the Goths. The influence of the arts and taste of Byzantium, communicated through the channels of commerce, the interchange of civilities, and the frequent intercourse between the courts of Constantinople and Toledo, appears in the mural ornamentation of the temples and in the vessels of their shrines, as well as in the habitations, utensils, and trinkets of the people. Geometric forms and floral designs—afterwards so popular among the Moors, who unquestionably derived them largely from this source—were almost exclusively employed by the Gothic goldsmiths and architects. Vines, leaves, buds, and quatrefoils enter into almost every combination in great variety and with charming effect. The churches were dimly lighted by means of marble slabs pierced with intersecting cruciform apertures, which increased the mystery and awe of the interior, devices which are visible to-day in places of worship as widely separated and of as originally diverse character as the chapels of the Asturias and the Mosque of Cordova. As soon as the rage and hatred inspired by the resistance of their enemies—and which was wreaked upon the edifices of the latter with hardly less vindictiveness than upon the ranks of their legions—had been allayed, a desire to profit by the skill and experience of their Roman subjects became paramount; new structures of simple design and enduring materials arose in the cities; the ancient monuments were spared; and the superior state of preservation which distinguishes the Roman remains in the Peninsula affords incontrovertible evidence of the enlightened appreciation of the Visigoths.

In the encouragement of the useful and elegant arts, the Visigoths displayed an enterprising spirit considerably in advance of the other branches of the great Teutonic nation. Manufactures of clothing, glass, armor, weapons, thread, and jewelry are known to have existed in their dominions. But it is in the fabrication of church furniture, votive offerings, and utensils designed for the service of the altar, that the labors of their artisans are best known to us. In the province of Guarrazar, a few miles from Toledo, was accidentally discovered, in the middle of the last century, a deposit of objects which had evidently been hastily buried by the priests on the approach of the Saracen invader. It was composed of a number of votive crowns—some of which were inscribed with the names of the donors—sceptres, censers, crosses, candlesticks, lamps, chains, girdles. All of these were of gold enriched with precious stones. The ignorance, fear, and avarice of the peasants who discovered this treasure resulted in the dispersion and loss of the most precious portion of it; but the crowns were saved, and are now in the Hotel de Cluny at Paris, and the Royal Armory at Madrid. These articles enable us to form an excellent idea of the condition of the arts at the beginning of the eighth century. The accounts given by Christian and Arab historians of the Visigothic kings, and of the enormous booty obtained by the Moors, had, until this discovery was made, been ridiculed by critics as exaggerations, due to the national vanity of both conquered and conqueror. From even a cursory examination of these objects—unique in the world—can readily be detected the taste and style of the Byzantine, whose influence over the artistic traditions of the Peninsula, far from disappearing with the Gothic dynasty, was exhibited in some of the most magnificent creations of the Moslem domination. The clumsy but massive patterns of the crowns show that the value of the materials was taken into consideration, quite as much as the labor that was expended upon them. From their ornamentation is revealed a not inconsiderable familiarity with the art of the enameller. Some of the settings are of polished silicates, inserted, probably by way of contrast, at intervals in lines of uncut gems. The accuracy with which they are adjusted and their points united is indicative of long practice and extraordinary skill. A separate intaglio belonging to the same treasure discloses a hitherto unsuspected degree of perfection in the glyptic art. The carving of stones as hard as the jacinth gives us a still further acquaintance with the skill of the Gothic lapidary, and the delicacy of the filigree borders is of almost equal excellence with the best work of modern Italy.

While the manufactures of Gothic Spain were due to the talents and industry of slaves, its commerce was monopolized by foreigners. The genius of the barbarian, fearless in adventure upon land but too indolent for application to mercantile employments, instinctively shrank from the perils and the hardships incident to protracted navigation of the seas. In agriculture, however, great progress was made. Pastoral occupations had been largely superseded by the tillage of the soil. The character of the various enactments relating to real property shows the importance with which that branch of the law was already invested, and the attention its occupancy and its tenures had received from the legislative power. In literature the Visigoths could boast of few productions of merit, and what we designate by the name of science was to them totally unknown. But a single name, that of San Isidoro of Seville, one, however, famous in every department of knowledge—historian, polemic, commentator, theologian, and saint—has emerged from the chaos of literary obscurity which enveloped the life of Visigothic times. His acquirements were prodigious for the age. The oracle of ecclesiastical councils, his writings were perhaps more voluminous than those of any other author that Spain has ever produced, and they are still regarded by Catholic divines as authoritative in settling controverted points of doctrine.

The practice of medicine—in addition to being subordinated to the irresponsible intervention of the priesthood, whose imposture reaped a profitable harvest by the working of spurious miracles and by the application of relics—was hampered by the prejudices of the ignorant, and by the absurd restrictions imposed by the jealousy of an ecclesiastical legislature. No matter how pressing the necessity, a physician was not permitted to attend a free woman unless her male relatives were present. If great weakness resulted from his treatment he could be heavily fined, and in case death ensued he was abandoned to the vengeance of the family of his patient. The law, however, as a partial compensation for the inconveniences to which he was subjected, exempted him from imprisonment for all crimes save that of murder. A limited knowledge of anatomy and some acquaintance with the fundamental principles of surgery were possessed by these practitioners, as is disclosed by their successful operations for cataract. Their compensation was regulated by statute, and was, besides, subject to special agreement; but, in case the patient was not cured, no fee could be collected, and the physician was liable, at all times, to prosecution for flagrant acts of malpractice.

The empire of the Visigoths, during the period of its greatest prosperity, extended from the valleys of the Loire and the Garonne to the Mediterranean. The surrender of a portion of this territory to Clovis consolidated the power of both the kingdoms of France and Spain, by adopting for their common boundary the natural rampart of the Pyrenees. The tastes and traditions of the Teutonic nation, heretofore averse to sedentary occupations, and considering all labor, and especially the cultivation of the soil, as degrading to the character of a freeman, caused such employment to be abandoned to the former subjects of the Roman Empire; nor was it until several centuries had elapsed, and the advantages resulting from industrious tillage had been demonstrated, that this prejudice was in some degree removed. At all times during the sway of the Visigoths, every species of manual labor was largely performed by slaves. The institution of colleges of artificers—a custom inherited from the most polished nation of antiquity—had been adopted by the barbarian conquerors, and the slaves composing these bodies, where the talents of the father were transmitted to the son, were naturally ranked among the most valuable of personal possessions. Large numbers of these artisans were the property of the Crown and of the Church, being respectively under the control of the Royal Treasurer and the Bishop, and the unique specimens of the goldsmith's skill which the fortunate discovery at Guarrazar has preserved for us, reveal to what proficiency in the mechanical arts these accomplished bondmen had attained.

The greatest luxury and pomp were indulged in by the Visigothic nation, a people which the world still calls barbarian. Their palaces were encrusted with precious marbles. The furniture of their apartments was of the most expensive character. The garments of the nobility were of silken fabrics embroidered with gold. The ladies of the court used for their ablutions basins of silver, and admired their beauty in exquisitely chased mirrors set with jewels. The horses of the royal household were covered with harnesses and trappings blazing with the precious metals. A hundred wagons laden with baggage and all the paraphernalia of boundless extravagance followed in the train of the monarch. Such was the lavish expenditure of even the middle and lower classes, that it became necessary to enact a law prohibiting the bestowal of a dowry of more than one-tenth of the property of a bridegroom upon the bride.

Not only did the Visigoths strive to imitate their Roman subjects in the style and finish of their edifices, but in every public employment, in every department of art and labor, was the potent influence of the subjugated people visible. The organization of the various corps and divisions of the army was modelled after that of the legion. The most popular amusements were, with the exception of gladiatorial combats, identical with those which had excited to frenzied enthusiasm the vast audiences of Rome and Constantinople in the circus and the amphitheatre. The dress of the citizen, the armor of the soldier, were Roman; the ornaments of the ladies, the insignia of royalty, the decorations of the churches, were Byzantine. The language in common use was a barbarous and bastard Latin. The fusion of hostile races, the amalgamation of the conqueror and the conquered, that political problem which has taxed the skill of the wisest statesmen, was almost brought to a successful solution by the broad statesmanship of the Visigothic sovereigns. The adoption and enforcement of a uniform and well-conceived body of laws did much to accomplish this end. But the acceptance of orthodox Christianity as the recognized form of national faith, and the legalizing of intermarriage between the different peoples of the Peninsula, by their tendency to remove the formidable barriers raised by caste, which had hitherto isolated the various classes of society, did far more to promote the union of the discordant elements of society. The Basques—constant types of the primitive Iberian—alone, among the multifarious tribes which acknowledged the supremacy of the court of Toledo, have preserved their nationality, and have obstinately refused to surrender those distinctive racial peculiarities that have made them for centuries the subject of the entertaining speculations of the ethnologist.

In some respects a striking parallel, in others a decided contrast existed between Goth and Arab, representatives of the Aryan and Semitic branches of the human family, who crossed swords in Europe for the first time in history, on the plains of the Spanish Peninsula. Between these two great ethnographical divisions, a spirit of irreconcilable enmity has always prevailed. No fusion between them has ever been effected. Where one has obtained ascendency in any part of the world, the other has either preserved its special traits or gradually become extinct. Considerations of political expediency, the claims of divine revelation, the benefits of trade, the ultimate prospect of national union and social equality, have not been sufficient to counteract the influence of an antagonism which anticipates all human records in its antiquity. The customs of nomadic peoples are proverbially persistent; their occupation frequently survives the change of residence, the accidents of migration, and the influence of new and radically different associations. Both the Goths and the Arabs placed their principal dependence upon their flocks and herds, but neither ever hesitated to exchange the crook of the shepherd for the spear of the robber. The love of war and violence was the predominating characteristic of both. They had a common admiration for courage as the greatest of virtues; a common appreciation of the noble qualities of personal liberty, of private honor, of generous hospitality. Their habits were slothful, their existence precarious. Their jealousy of power forbade their acknowledgment of royal authority. They considered all industrial employments as beneath the dignity of manhood. Their worship was tainted with the most objectionable features of idolatry,—the adoration of stones, the practice of fetichism, the horrors of human sacrifice. Alike were they drunkards and desperate gamesters, who eagerly placed their liberty at stake, whose revels resounded with brawling, and whose disputes were settled with the sword. They recognized no permanent ownership in the soil, possessed little portable wealth, were ignorant of the arts and without the knowledge of letters. Like all barbarians, they believed disease and insanity to be caused by demoniacal possession. With both, love of poetry was a passion, and the personality of the bard the object of almost idolatrous reverence. Such were the traits common to two nations, separated by a distance of eighteen hundred miles, ignorant of each other's existence, and living under entirely dissimilar climatic conditions. The atmosphere of the Baltic was perpetually cold and damp, that of Arabia dry and torrid almost beyond endurance. Eastern Europe was covered with dense forests, traversed by noble rivers, and dotted with impassable swamps. In the Desert nothing was so rare as a tree or rivulet. The physical conformation of the Goth and the Arab respectively was controlled by his environment to an even greater degree than was the mental constitution of either. The former was of giant stature and strength, and of fair complexion; the latter slender, nervous, and swarthy. With the Goth, female chastity was held in the highest esteem; with the Arab, it was the subject of caustic epigram, of jest, and of satire. The Goth, a monogamist, knew nothing of the pleasures of gallantry; the polygamous Arab placed indulgence in them second only to the excitement of battle. The Goths were among the first and most devout proselytes of Christianity; the Arabs have ever obstinately refused to acknowledge the divinity of Christ or the superior authority of the Gospel.

That invincible prowess which, nurtured by poverty and an abstemious life, was displayed with equal distinction and success amidst the forests of Europe and on the sandy plains of Africa, was the potent weapon which obtained for each of these great nations supremacy over their adversaries; an advantage which, through internal dissension, sectarian prejudice, and social corruption, was eventually lost; but not until the moral and physical peculiarities of both had impressed themselves upon their contemporaries, so deeply as to insure their transmission, with but little modification, to subsequent ages.

The spirit of the Visigoths was, almost from the first, decidedly progressive. This general tendency towards improvement, and a desire for the blessings of civilization, stimulated commercial activity, increased domestic happiness, and opened a field for the development of art, the advancement of science, the strict administration of justice, and the consequent decrease of brutality and crime. The wisdom of the Gothic polity and the equity of its laws afford a pleasing and instructive example of the capacity of a people to raise itself unaided from barbarism—a people which, in addition to the romantic interest attaching to its history, is entitled to the grateful remembrance of mankind for the beneficent influence it has exerted upon the political institutions and the social order of Europe; as well as for the creation of a judicial system whose merits and whose principles, confirmed by the experience of centuries, are still acknowledged by the most august tribunals of the civilized world.

CHAPTER V

THE INVASION AND CONQUEST OF SPAIN

710–713

General Conditions and Physical Features of the Spanish Peninsula—Various Classes of the Population—Supremacy of the Church—Tyranny of the Visigothic Kings—Fatal Policy of Witiza—Accession of Roderick—Count Julian—Invasion of Tarik—Battle of the Guadalete—Its Momentous Results—Progress of the Moslems—Arrival of Musa—His Success—Immense Booty secured by the Victors—Quarrel of Tarik and Musa—Interference of the Khalif—Submission of the Goths—Musa's Vast Scheme of Conquest—The Two Generals ordered to Damascus—The Triumphal Procession through Africa—Fate of Musa—Causes and Effects of the Moslem Occupation of Spain.

THE encroaching spirit of Islam, dominated by the potent motives of avarice, ambition, and fanaticism, was not content with its marvellous achievements and the possession of two continents, it aspired to universal conquest. The submission of Africa was now complete. The sovereignty of the Byzantine Empire had vanished forever from the southern coast of the Mediterranean. The tact and military skill of Musa had won the confidence, and inspired the respect, of the treacherous, warlike, and hitherto intractable, tribes of Mauritania. A large number of the latter had embraced Mohammedanism. A still greater proportion who, either from association, policy, or conviction, professed attachment to the law of Moses, maintained an intimate correspondence with their oppressed brethren of the Spanish Peninsula. The latter in secret brooded over the accumulated wrongs of centuries, and, under an appearance of resignation, harbored designs that boded ill to the temporal and ecclesiastical tyrants of the Visigothic monarchy. The restless glance of the Arabian general had long contemplated with envy, mingled with an insatiable desire for plunder, the rich and splendid cities of ancient Bætica; its teeming mines; its pastures, with their myriads of cattle; its plains, traversed by innumerable canals and rivers; where even a careless and incomplete system of cultivation produced harvests almost rivalling in luxuriance those of the famous valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile. A strait, of less than eight miles in width in its narrowest part, now presented the sole physical impediment to the further progress of the conqueror. It was defended upon the African side by the fortress of Ceuta, whose governor was a vassal or tributary of the Visigothic king, and whose valor had rendered nugatory the efforts of the bravest Moslem captains, who, fully appreciating the strategic importance of this stronghold, had made repeated and desperate attempts to capture it. This promontory, which formed one side of the channel, familiar for ages to the Phœnicians, and supposed by the ignorant to be the end of the world, was protected from foreign intrusion by the portentous fables and prodigies invented by Tyrian artifice. Facing it, on the Spanish shore, stood the Temple of Hercules, with its dome of gilded bronze, its columns of electrum, and its mysterious altars raised to Art, Old Age, and Poverty. Unlike other Pagan shrines—for it contained no visible representation of a divinity—it was always approached by the Phœnician mariner with feelings of gratitude and awe. It was associated with his naval superiority over the other nations of antiquity. It was intimately connected with the increase of his wealth; with the continuance of his prosperity; with the discovery of lands unknown to his contemporaries and rivals; with the preservation of his stores of occult wisdom, whose sources he explored with such acuteness and concealed with such success. Every device of fable and superstition had been employed to clothe this locality with such a character as might effectually check the efforts of an inquiring or aggressive commercial spirit. To the accomplishment of this end, the phenomena of Nature lent their powerful aid. The contracted passage between two of the greatest bodies of water known to the ancients was of unfathomable depth. On both sides, despite the agitation of the waves, its level remained the same. Even during both the ebb and flow of the tide, the current always ran strongly towards the east. Its force was steady, constant, invariable; the waxing and waning of the moon, the most furious tempests, exerted no appreciable influence over the inflexible regularity of its motion. It was not without reason that the apparent suspension of the laws of equilibrium and of the forces of Nature was attributed by the superstitious to the divinity whose temple guarded the famous portals upon which he had imposed his name. It has been maintained by scholars that within this shrine was preserved, as a sacred relic, a fragment of magnetic ore, of great antiquity, known to the Tyrian navigator as a priceless talisman—the precursor of the mariner's compass — which had guided his course to distant Britain, and assured to his countrymen the empire of the seas. According to popular belief, through this channel the way led to the realm of Chaos. To brave its unknown and dreaded perils was sacrilege, and to none, save those authorized by the priests of Melcareth, was this undertaking permitted. In subsequent times, invested with little less mystery, this region had bequeathed not a few of its reminiscences to the Roman, and awakened the curiosity of the Arab, as he fixed his gaze upon the white-topped waves sparkling in the sunlight between continent and continent and sea and sea, like the facets of a precious gem; or, in the beautiful imagery of the Oriental chronicler, "like a diamond between two emeralds and two sapphires, the master-stone in the ring of empire."

In the beginning of the eighth century the kingdom of the Visigoths presented every appearance of prosperity and power. Its inherent weakness was imperfectly disguised by the pomp of its hierarchy and the luxury of its court, which veiled the defects of its constitution and the abuses of its government with a false and delusive splendor. Its licentious sovereign retained none of the primitive virtues of his ancestors, whose intrepid spirit and resistless valor had sustained them on a hundred fields of battle, and had borne their arms in a long succession of triumphs from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. The successor of Reccared and Wamba had degenerated into a feeble tyrant, who reigned by a disputed title, and in whose sensual nature neither the rites of hospitality, the obligations of friendship, the dignity of the regal office, nor the infirmities of age, interposed any obstacle to the indulgence of his unbridled passions.

A haughty nobility decimated by the sanguinary feuds promoted by a contested succession, and divided into factions whose members hated each other with far greater intensity than that which they bore to a common enemy; unaccustomed to the exercise of arms; destitute of faith and honor; concealing treasonable sentiments under the semblance of enthusiastic loyalty, endeavored to sustain, by vainglorious boasts and barbaric ostentation, the dignity of their order and the majesty of the throne. The martial ardor of the legions which had for centuries upheld the greatness and the renown of the Roman name had been supplanted by the zeal and avarice of the monastic hordes, who defended by every expedient of fraud and violence the rising cause of the church militant. The crosier, in the hands of an arrogant caste which monopolized the learning of the age, had become far more potent than the sword or the sceptre, and the origin of all political measures of national importance was to be sought not in the palace but in the cathedral. The wise, tolerant, and judicious policy of the early ecclesiastics, that had animated and directed the councils of the Church, which by its humanizing influence had softened the prevailing rudeness of the age, and framed laws whose equitable maxims have served as models for succeeding legislators, had been abandoned for the degrading but profitable occupation of hunting down and plundering heretics. The proud and exclusive hierarchy of the Visigoths refused to acknowledge the supremacy, or respect the edicts, of the See of Rome. When the Pope interfered in the spiritual affairs of the Peninsula—an occurrence, however, that rarely took place—he did so rather in the capacity of a mediator, or even a suppliant, than as a mighty ruler, the head of Christendom, and the Vicar of God. His titles were assumed and his prerogatives usurped by the Spanish prelates; his infallibility was questioned, not only by the higher clergy, whose ministrations were declared to be endowed with equal virtue, but even by the sovereign and the nobles, who openly ridiculed his pretensions and defied his authority. The evil example of royal profligacy had infected every grade of the priesthood. The episcopal palace became the scene of daily turmoil and midnight orgies, which scandalized the populace, itself far from immaculate; while the excellence of the wines and the beauty of the female companions of priest and primate were matters of public jest and infamous notoriety. The relative positions of the great officials of Church and State had, by reason of the peculiar functions exercised by the former, who had entirely usurped the legislative power, been reversed. The prelate, while still retaining the outward insignia of his sacred profession, had, from the practice of the generous and self-sacrificing duties of a minister of grace and mercy, descended to the ignoble arts of an active, scheming, unscrupulous politician. The nobility, after having virtually surrendered to their spiritual advisers the complete control of the administration, preserved, to a pharisaical degree, the outward semblance of devotion. In private life, the morals of both classes were stained with degrading vices and crimes which were thinly veiled by a more or less rigid observance of the prescribed forms of religious worship.

No country in Europe had, from the earliest times of which history makes mention, constantly offered such inducements to the enterprise and prowess of an invader as Spain. The Orient and the Occident met upon her shores. Every material advantage which could attract the attention of man, which could stimulate his ambition, increase his wealth, insure his comfort, supply his necessities, and minister to his happiness, was hers. The balmy air of her southern provinces—whose skies for months were unobscured by a single cloud—was tempered by the breezes of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The varied landscape of hill and plain, seamed with a net-work of artificial rivulets, was covered with a mantle of perpetual verdure. Her orchards furnished an inexhaustible supply of the most delicious fruits. The products of her mines had made the fortune of every possessor—Phœnician, Carthaginian, Roman, Vandal, and Goth. Her gold and silver had embellished the thrones of Babylon, the shrines of Tyre, the palaces of Memphis, the temple of Jerusalem. Her coasts, easy of access from every point, offered a succession of safe and commodious harbors. The

Visigoths, despite their barbarian prejudice against manual labor, recognized the importance of agriculture. The provinces of the realm were apportioned among the nobility. A stated tribute was required of their vassals by the great landed proprietors, who rarely had the justice to grant indulgence for a failure of the harvests or a deficiency, resulting from public or private misfortune. The cultivators were attached to the glebe, which could not be alienated without them, and, forming an hereditary caste, were, to all intents and purposes, slaves; although, under the Gothic polity, their position was nominally superior to that of the unfortunate who was exposed for sale in the market. From these two classes, dispirited by generations of arduous toil and constant oppression, were recruited the rank and file of the army, who were expected to fight for the preservation of their tyrants' possessions and the continuance of their own degradation. The lot of the serf under later Visigothic rule was, in general, far more grievous than that of the slave had been under the Roman. The Teutonic custom which encouraged the imposition of personal service in return for protection was unknown under the Empire. The rendering of this obligation an hereditary charge—a cardinal principle of the German constitution, but which became in a measure obsolete under the later Visigothic kings—added to the aggravation which attended its performance. The restrictions upon marriage, the separation of families, the severity of punishment imposed for even trifling offences, added to the humiliation and hardships of the servile condition. While the Arian heresy was predominant, the burdens of serfdom were lightened, and its state had been gradually improved. The generosity of the bishops was displayed in every way that kindness and consideration could suggest; in the diminution of labor; in rewards for fidelity; in attendance in sickness; in sympathy in misfortune. The unhappy serf, deceived by these concessions and favors, not unnaturally concluded that they portended increased liberty and ultimate emancipation. The clergy gave color to this presumption by frequent declarations from the pulpit that slavery was contrary to the teachings of the Gospel. In time, with the increase of influence, the control of royal elections, and the absolute dictation of the policy of the throne, these spiritual statesmen found it expedient to forget the benevolent precepts of government which they had formerly so earnestly inculcated. After the acceptance of the orthodox faith, the inherent evils of the servile system were magnified to an unprecedented degree. The high rank, sacred character, and practically unlimited power of the great prelates of the Church, offered unusual opportunities for the indulgence of the passions of tyranny and avarice. The dependents of bishops walked in the processions, by which were celebrated the great festivals of the Church, attired in silken liveries embroidered with gold. The appointments of their palaces and the magnificence of their trains surpassed even those of the sovereign. The estates of these dignitaries were the most extensive and important of the kingdom; in many instances they exceeded in value the royal demesnes. Immense numbers of slaves were employed upon them, not merely in the cultivation of the soil, but in the producing and perfecting of every article, then known, which could contribute to the pleasure of their luxurious lords. For these unhappy laborers, whose tasks each year became more arduous, and whose aspirations for liberty, cherished during many generations, were now destroyed, the prospect of relief from their unsupportable burdens seemed absolutely hopeless. Inferior in numbers to these two classes of agricultural serfs, and the individuals condemned by the accident of birth, or the process of law, to perpetual bondage, but vastly superior to them in intelligence, in shrewdness, and in all the arts of deceit, were the Jews. A sweeping decree of the Seventeenth Council of Toledo had confiscated their possessions and sentenced them to servitude. A hundred thousand of these sectaries, in whose breasts rankled a spirit of fierce and sullen hatred, born of hostility handed down for ages, and aggravated by a system of repression scarcely justifiable even by the sternest demands of political necessity, constituted an element of a far more dangerous character than all of the others whose machinations and discontent had undermined the fabric of the Visigothic empire. The national sentiment of superiority—born of theocratic government, of the claims of an arrogant priesthood, of the alleged favor of the Almighty, and of the traditions of three thousand years—was then, as now, all-powerful in the minds of the Jewish people. The defective annals of that age have failed to furnish us with data by which we can determine with what degree of strictness the laws against the Hebrews were enforced. It is probable, however, that in the cities, where a higher condition of intelligence existed and more correct ideas of justice obtained, observance of these inhuman edicts was frequently evaded. In the villages and hamlets the fanaticism and jealousy of the peasantry undoubtedly inflicted every hardship and indignity upon the Jews. In vain might the favored steward or counsellor of the noble, who still retained his residence in the palace, and continued to supply by his own talents and experience the deficiencies produced by his employer's sloth and incapacity, attempt to alleviate the wretchedness of his countrymen. With the ignorant rabble, the possession of wealth and the exertion of political power by heretics were always unpardonable crimes. The clergy, on all occasions, for ends of their own, fomented the popular discontent, lauded this cruel policy as acceptable to God, and by every device sought to perpetuate the ancient antagonism of the Aryan and Semitic races, in which is to be sought one cause of the irrational and widely-diffused prejudice against the Jew. This feeling was also intensified by the current tradition that, during the reign of Leovigild, the Hebrews had, with unconcealed alacrity, aided the heterodox clergy in persecuting members of the Roman Catholic communion. Under these circumstances, too much importance cannot be attached to the part played in the Moorish occupation of Spain by this numerous and enterprising sect, skilled in all the arts of dissimulation, and exasperated by centuries of oppression, which the Visigothic kingdom nourished in its bosom. Without the information afforded by its members the Arab attack would probably have never been undertaken. Without its support and co-operation it is certain that the subjugation of a nation of six million souls could never have been accomplished in the space of a few months by a mere handful of undisciplined horsemen.

No nation has ever flourished under the rule of a hierarchy. The circumstances indispensable for the security and happiness of the subject are incompatible with the demands of the alleged representatives of divine inspiration and omnipotent power. The narrow policy inseparable from protracted ecclesiastical domination is inevitably productive of national ruin and disgrace. In this instance, it dispossessed the Spanish people of the richest part of their inheritance for eight hundred years. Under the monarchs of the Austrian line—incapable of profiting by the experience of their predecessors and deaf to the warnings of history—similar acts of imprudence and folly contributed more than aught else to deprive the Spanish Crown of the political supremacy of Europe.

The events in the annals of Spain which relate to the close of the seventh and the commencement of the eighth century are involved in more than ordinary obscurity. It was a period fraught with political and social disturbance. Treason and regicide, crimes from which, heretofore, the Gothic people had been proverbially exempt, were now considered justifiable expedients by every ambitious noble who aspired to raise himself to the throne. The degrees of favor and absolution which the successful traitor could expect from the clergy were directly proportionate to the value of the gifts which he was able to deposit in the treasury of the Church. Every offence, no matter how flagrant, was pardonable after satisfactory pecuniary intercession with the priest. The fulminations of the Holy Council were denounced against all who refused allegiance to the royal assassin, whose election had been ratified by the votes of the assembled prelates. Where the aspirant to kingly power lacked the courage for deeds of blood, a resort to fraud was deemed excusable, provided it was attended with success and the customary liberal contribution for ecclesiastical purposes was not forgotten. To such a depth of degradation had fallen the descendants of the loyal, brave, and generous warriors of the Teutonic race!

The greatness of the Visigothic monarchy had departed with the reign of Wamba, the last of its heroes, and one illustrious for the practice of every public and every private virtue. Deprived of his crown by an artifice which reflected more credit on the astuteness than on the integrity of his successor, he was condemned to pass the latter portion of his life in a convent. The new king Ervigius, after an uneventful reign, left his kingdom to his son-in-law Egiza. The character of the latter monarch, while not destitute of the manly virtues of courage and resolution, was tarnished by insatiable rapacity. He was as persevering in his pursuit of wealth as he was unscrupulous in his methods of obtaining it. He commuted the enforcement of penal laws for the payment of fines, which varied with the pecuniary ability of the culprit to discharge them, without regard to the degree or the circumstances of the crime. Under trivial pretexts, he banished wealthy citizens and confiscated their property. He imposed excessive taxes. Emboldened by the impunity of power, he did not hesitate to resort even to forgery; and, by means of spurious documents, implicated in offences against the state such wealthy individuals as had the hardihood to resist his importunate demands. And, worst of all, he lost no opportunity to appropriate the revenues of the Church, under whatever pretence his ingenuity or his audacity might suggest. By an unprincipled and tyrannical hierarchy the former misdemeanors might be overlooked, but the latter offence was tainted with the double reproach of oppression and sacrilege. After formal and unavailing remonstrance, a plot was formed in 692 by Sisebert, Archbishop of Toledo, which had for its object the assassination of the King and his entire family. Some of the most powerful nobles were involved in this conspiracy, which was hatched by the principal ecclesiastics of the capital. Timely information of the plot having reached the ears of the sovereign, the most vigorous means were taken to counteract it. The metropolitan was arrested and deposed. A number of the chief conspirators were executed or exiled. Scarcely had this conspiracy been suppressed, before the existence of a still more formidable one was revealed. The Hebrews, whose condition under this and the preceding reign had been more favorable than for many years, evincing no gratitude for the leniency with which they had been treated, and remembering only past indignities, exulting in their numbers and influence, and assured of aid from Barbary, made arrangements for a general revolt, with a view to a complete reorganization of the government and the metamorphosis of Spain into an absolutely Jewish kingdom. This treasonable design was discovered, however, almost at the moment when it was ripe for execution. The authorities took measures to insure their safety with exemplary severity. A council was convoked and a decree passed, by which the Jews were condemned to be banished, enslaved, stripped of their possessions, and deprived of their children. The outrageous cruelty of the measure, however, caused an almost immediate reaction, and it was not generally enforced. The discontented sectaries, grieving under their accumulated wrongs, and exasperated by the miscarriage of their plans, continued to hope for assistance from abroad, and embraced every opportunity to send information of the public disorders to their sympathetic brethren in Africa. The reign of Egiza, agitated hitherto by almost incessant political convulsions, was now threatened with the evils of foreign invasion. A Saracen fleet, well manned and equipped, descended upon the defenceless Spanish coast, ravaged the fields, plundered the villages, and carried the inhabitants into captivity. To provide against this new danger a naval expedition was fitted out, and entrusted to the command of Theodomir, an officer of approved experience, and a noble of the highest rank. Setting sail, the Gothic admiral lost no time in encountering the hostile fleet. A bloody engagement took place; two hundred of the enemy's vessels were destroyed or taken; and the embryotic maritime power of the Moslems was swept from the seas. In the following year a war with the Franks, the cause of which is unknown, was carried on for several months with the indecisive results characteristic of the operations of desultory warfare. Egiza, being advanced in years and conscious of his infirmities, was desirous of associating his son Witiza with him in the administration, and of securing to him the succession at his decease. A council having been convoked for this purpose, his wishes were realized without opposition, and Witiza was raised to the regal dignity. The following year the old King died, leaving to his young and inexperienced successor the sole responsibility of government, and a series of difficulties and embarrassments such as no other monarch of his time had hitherto been forced to contend with, and which involved both the stability of the Visigothic empire and the preservation of the Christian faith. The accession of Witiza promised a happy and prosperous future to the country afflicted with so many calamities. His youth had been distinguished by the practice of the virtues of temperance, generosity, justice, and filial reverence. As soon as he attained to absolute power, he evinced a disposition to win the attachment of the people by making amends for the pecuniary exactions and oppressive laws which had been imposed by the avarice and extortions of his family. A general amnesty was proclaimed. The forged documents by which the wealthy had been plundered were destroyed. All taxes, except such as were absolutely necessary to the support of the government, were remitted. Great numbers of exiles were invited to return, and their possessions were surrendered. The Jews were restored to partial favor; but, as the popular prejudice was still bitter and universal, a politic appearance of severity was maintained, which, however, it was evident would be entirely removed in time. Under such favorable auspices began the reign of Witiza, whose magnanimity, tact, and affable demeanor had already won the hearts of his subjects. The opinion of the latter was at first confirmed by the mild disposition and virtuous behavior of their youthful sovereign. But this fair promise of future greatness was fallacious, for Witiza soon plunged into excesses which awakened the horror of his subjects, and provoked the censures of the clergy, ever disposed to be lenient towards such transgressions except when they threatened their influence or their revenues. The whole court was soon abandoned to indiscriminate licentiousness. Not only was the violation of the most sacred traditions of the Church permitted, but polygamy and concubinage were openly encouraged by sacerdotal authority and example. The pious instructors of the people were the first to improve the opportunities afforded by these impolitic enactments, and the feelings of the devout were outraged by excesses which did not respect even the sacred precincts of the altar and the confessional. No scandals, however, aroused such indignation as the indulgence which was manifested towards the Jews. Every ecclesiastic, especially, considered any moderation of the condition of this down-trodden race an affront to his order, and a crime worse than sacrilege. Enraged by the contempt with which Witiza treated their remonstrances, the clergy lost no occasion of increasing the prevailing discontent, and, with a view to strengthening their position by enlisting the aid of the Holy See, they secretly despatched an embassy to Rome. The ire of the Pope was excited by the representations of the envoys of the Spanish Church, whose prelates, though not acknowledging his supreme jurisdiction, did not disdain to solicit his intervention as an affair which seemed to involve the interests of Christendom. Elated by the hope of establishing his authority in the Peninsula, the Holy Father Constantine, without delay, sent a message to the recalcitrant monarch threatening him with the loss of his kingdom, unless he at once revoked the offensive edicts and permitted the unrestricted persecution of the Jews. To this Witiza retorted with contempt that if the Pope did not cease intermeddling with what did not concern him, he would drive him from the Vatican; and he forthwith published an edict that no attention should be paid to the mandates of the Papacy under penalty of death. These proceedings further embittered the prejudices of both the clergy and the people, and the popular clamor became so loud that Witiza began to tremble for both his crown and his life. Agitated by his fears, and resolved to afford as little encouragement as possible to any treasonable undertaking, he dismantled the principal fortresses, and razed the walls of every city in the kingdom, excepting those of Toledo, Astorga, and Lugo; an act of folly which not only failed of its object, but in the end directly contributed to the overthrow of the monarchy. The Jews, on the other hand, now placed in positions of profit and responsibility, far from appreciating the honors with which they were invested and the confidence which was reposed in them, with characteristic treachery and ingratitude, availed themselves of their power for the destruction of their royal benefactor. Aided by their intrigues, a formidable conspiracy broke out. The majority of the clergy and a considerable body of the nobles joined the insurgents; a rival king was elected; and, after a short conflict, Witiza was deposed and probably murdered, for history has preserved no record of his fate.

The new monarch, Roderick, although he had reached the great age of eighty-two years, retained, in an unusual degree, the strength and activity of early manhood. His life had been passed amidst the athletic pastimes which exercised the leisure of the Gothic youth, and, in occasional expeditions undertaken against the hardy mountaineers of Galicia and Biscay, he had earned a well-merited reputation for courage and military skill. Although not of royal blood, his natural endowments, the dignity of his carriage, the apparent but deceptive austerity of his manners, and the mildness of his temper, gained for him the respect of all who were admitted to his presence. In the elegant luxury of his palace, in the splendor of his retinue, in the majestic pomp which distinguished every public ceremony over which he presided, he far surpassed his predecessors, and emulated, with no little success, the magnificence of the Roman court in the age of imperial decadence.

The intriguing spirit which animated the subjects of a monarchy essentially elective, but one where courtesy and real or apparent merit occasionally made an exception in favor of hereditary descent, had established, among the Visigoths, the custom of retaining near the throne the children of powerful families; nominally for purposes of education, but in fact to insure the fidelity of their relatives often entrusted with the custody of frontier strongholds or important military commands. The sons, until they attained to manhood, served as pages in the royal household, and were trained in all the manly and martial exercises of the time. The attendants of the queens were recruited from the noble maidens, whom this prudent custom placed and retained in the precincts of the court, and who were carefully instructed in the few but graceful accomplishments indispensable to the position of ladies of distinguished lineage. Among the latter, at the court of Roderick, was the daughter of Count Julian, formerly a vassal of the Byzantine Empire, and the commandant of the fortress of Ceuta; whom political necessity, the isolation consequent upon the subjugation of every Greek settlement in Africa, and the rapidly increasing power of the Moors, had compelled to appeal to the nearest Christian monarch for protection, and to transfer his allegiance to the court of Toledo. This girl, who was of great beauty, excited the licentious desires of the King, who, failing to accomplish his object by fair means, in an evil hour resorted to force. Informed of the injury which had been inflicted upon his family, Count Julian, braving without hesitation the storms of winter, hastened to the capital. Dissembling, with true Greek astuteness, his outraged feelings, he asked permission to remove his daughter to the bedside of her mother whom he represented as being dangerously ill. Without any misgivings Roderick granted the request, and, manifesting every appearance of respect and loyalty, the veteran officer left the court and retraced his steps. No sooner had he arrived at his post, than he began to carry out the plan of vengeance which he had already fully matured. The castle of Ceuta was the key of Europe. Impregnable to all the resources of military engineering in an age when gunpowder was unknown, its value as an obstacle to foreign invasion was not understood by the Visigoths. The immunity of centuries; the contempt for barbarians; the ignorance of the mighty and unexampled power of Islam; the inertia produced partly by the influence of climate, but principally by an abuse of all the pleasures of unbridled luxury, had disposed the sovereigns of Toledo to consider their kingdom inaccessible to attack, and their empire eternal. As has already been mentioned, this haughty and corrupt nation was constantly agitated and its integrity menaced by a score of discordant factions. Its recent monarchs had bent all their energies to the abrogation of the statesmanlike measures inaugurated by their forefathers. The nobles and the clergy, inflamed with mutual animosity, suspicious of their partisans, and arrayed against each other, were engaged in a mortal struggle for superiority. The Jews, indulged and persecuted by turns, lived in a continual state of apprehension and despair. All the salutary restraints of religion were apparently removed; the Church was regarded as a convenient instrument for the attainment of political power; the priesthood were devoted to the practice of nameless vices; the people to indiscriminate libertinage. A large body of slaves, who, under the lash of brutal masters, still preserved the traditions of liberty, were ripe for revolt, and longed for the day of their deliverance. A disastrous famine, followed by its usual successor the pestilence, and whose effects were still apparent in untilled fields and deserted hamlets, had contributed to increase the popular suffering and discontent. Fortified on one side against the incursions of the Franks by the natural rampart of the Pyrenees, and isolated on the others by the Mediterranean and the ocean, the inhabitants of the Peninsula, in the enjoyment of a salubrious climate and fruitful soil, rested in fancied security, and had long since laid aside the armor whose weight had become oppressive, and abandoned those warlike exercises whose preservation was their only safeguard.

Incited by a spirit of desperation which considered neither the consequences of his acts nor the means by which they were to be accomplished, Count Julian sought the presence of Musa. He found the Moslem general at Kairoan, which had been selected as the seat of the viceregal government of Western Africa. The intrepid character of his visitor was not unknown to the great Arab soldier whose designs upon Ceuta had been twice frustrated, by the valiant Greek, after the employment of all the resources at the command of the Khalif, and Count Julian was received with every token of honor and respect. Unfolding his project, he descanted long and earnestly upon the riches of the Gothic monarchy and the facility of its conquest. He explained the feuds and bitter feelings engendered by disappointed ambition, by religious persecution, by the seizure of hereditary estates, by the sufferings of wounded pride. He expatiated on the sense of injury experienced by the advocates of hereditary descent, who considered the reigning monarch of foreign lineage and inferior rank that had justly incurred the odium of usurpation. He portrayed in glowing terms the innumerable attractions of the country, its productive valleys, its crystal streams, the medicinal value of its herbs and plants to which magical virtues were attributed by popular report, its mines, its fisheries, the precious spoil which awaited the hand of the invader, the transcendent beauty of its women. He described the effeminate character of the inhabitants, enervated by idleness, luxury, and sensual indulgence. Much of this information was already familiar to Musa, but hitherto the impassable barrier of the fortress defended by the stubborn courage of the governor of Ceuta had checked the aspirations of the Moslem commander; nor had it been possible to even confirm the accuracy of the wonderful tales which had been related concerning Ghezirah-al-Andalus, or the Vandal Peninsula, as Spain was known to the Arabs.

Thoroughly appreciating the importance of the proposal, the magnitude of the interests involved, and the uncertainty which would attend the issue of the expedition, and, at the same time, distrusting the good faith of the Goth, Musa determined to obtain the consent of the Khalif before returning a definite answer. Despatches, with complete information, were accordingly sent to Damascus. The reply of Al-Walid, who then occupied the throne of the khalifate, was favorable; but he strongly advised the exercise of caution, a recommendation entirely superfluous in the case of a man of Musa's suspicious and crafty disposition. Sending for Count Julian, Musa informed him that he would be required to prove his fidelity by heading a reconnoissance into the enemy's country. The count accepted the condition with alacrity; crossed the strait with a small detachment of soldiers belonging to his garrison; ravaged the coast in the neighborhood of Medina Sidonia; burned several churches; destroyed the growing harvests, and returned with considerable booty. Knowing his ally to be now compromised beyond all hope of pardon, and the trifling resistance encountered having apparently demonstrated the feasibility of the enterprise, Musa announced his willingness to negotiate. The conditions of the compact which disposed of one of the richest kingdoms of Europe have escaped the notice of history. There is reason to believe, however, that Count Julian was promised substantial pecuniary remuneration in addition to the gratification of revenge; and that their hereditary estates were to be restored to the family of Witiza, whose sons were present at the conference, and whose brother Oppas was not only privy to the conspiracy but was one of its principal promoters. The keys of Ceuta were surrendered, and Count Julian, having sworn allegiance to the Khalif, was invested with a command in the Moslem army.

The wary old veteran Musa was not yet satisfied, and determined to send a second expedition, under one of his own captains, to explore the Spanish coast. He selected for this purpose one of his trusty freedmen, Abu-Zarah-Tarif by name, who, embarking with one hundred cavalry and three hundred infantry, landed at Ghezirah-al-Khadra, now Algeziras, in July, 710. The incursion of Tarif differed little in its results from that of his predecessor, but confirmed the representations of the latter, and proved beyond doubt the defenceless condition of the Visigothic kingdom.

Preparations for war were now made upon a larger scale, but one which still could not contemplate the overthrow of the monarchy in the incredibly short period required to accomplish it, and which, indeed, was designed only as a predatory expedition. The command of the troops was given to Tarik-Ibn-Zeyad, a Berber, whose red hair and light complexion disclosed his descent from the Vandals. The similar names of these two officers, both of whom were freedmen of Musa, have led to a confusion and mistaken identity, which has greatly embarrassed the narratives of both ancient chroniclers and modern historians. Tarik was a soldier of approved experience, extraordinary enterprise, and unflinching courage. His army was one of the most motley forces which had ever been assembled under the Moslem standard. The number was comparatively insignificant, amounting to only seven thousand, of whom but few were cavalry. The bulk of the troops was composed of Berbers—fierce savages of the Atlas Mountains, proselytes reclaimed from fetichism by the policy and eloquence of Musa—among them being representatives of the tribes of Ghomarah, Masmoudah, and Zenetah, names destined to a cruel celebrity in the subsequent history of Spain. Every nation whose types chance, misfortune, the love of plunder, or the spirit of adventure had impelled upon the African coast, was represented in the ranks of the invaders; descendants of the Vandals and the Goths; Bedouins from the Hedjaz; political exiles from the far Orient; conspirators from Syria; apostate Byzantines who had renounced allegiance to the Emperor of Constantinople; and a considerable body of Jews, whose relations with their Spanish brethren rendered them valuable auxiliaries, swelled the command of Tarik. In the latter were adherents of every form of religion,—the adorer of fire, the worshipper of the stars, the Pagan votary of the gods of Olympus, the orthodox and the heretic Christian. Each tribe was marshalled under its respective banner, and the varied nationality of the rank and file was equally displayed in the widely diverse origin of the subordinate officers —Count Julian the renegade Greek, Tarik the Berber, Mugayth-al-Rumi the Goth, and Kaula-al-Yahudi the Jew. Vessels for the passage of the strait were furnished by Count Julian, who impressed such merchantmen as lay at anchor in the ports under his jurisdiction, the only ones obtainable; the number of these, however, was so insufficient that the transportation of the army consumed several days. The Moslems finally disembarked at the foot of an immense promontory known to the ancient world as Calpe, but which, rechristened by the Arabs Gebal-al-Tarik, the Mountain of Tarik, has transmitted its new appellation, almost unchanged, to future ages as the famous Gibraltar. Scarcely had the invaders landed, when they were attacked by the Goths under Theodomir, that chieftain whose successful conduct of the naval expedition during the reign of Egiza had induced Roderick to invest him with the command of the forces at his disposal. The ill-equipped and undisciplined troops of the Gothic general at once disclosed their inability to withstand the onset of the fiery horsemen of the Desert, and Theodomir was compelled to retreat. He sent, without delay, the alarming news of the invasion to the King, revealing the universal dismay with which this strange enemy was regarded, in the following language: "Our land has been invaded by people whose name, country, and origin are unknown to me. I cannot even tell thee whence they came, whether they fell from the skies or sprang from the earth." This ominous despatch reached Roderick before the walls of Pampeluna, which had recently revolted against his authority. Whatever were his faults, the Gothic monarch was certainly not deficient in courage and resolution. Raising the siege, he hastened to Cordova, and devoted all his energies to the assembling of an immense army for the defence of the kingdom. Every resource was employed,—promises of amnesty, threats, bounties, and conscription, until a hundred thousand men had been mustered under the royal standard. But this great host was formidable only in appearance. The levies of which it was composed were wholly wanting in discipline and unaccustomed to the perils of warfare. Their weapons were mainly implements whose use was familiar in the practice of the peaceful arts of husbandry. The rank and file, a tumultuous rabble of slaves and hirelings, marched on foot. Horses were few and expensive in the Peninsula; only the nobles were mounted; and to the deficiency of cavalry among the Goths the Arab historians have largely attributed the crushing reverses sustained by their arms. To the unwieldy and disorderly character of the Gothic army was added the secret and fatal influence of treason. Thousands had been enrolled to defend the imperilled crown of Roderick, whose chief desire was the transfer of that crown to a rival dynasty. Others, high in rank, had tendered their services with the hope that, amidst the general confusion, they might push their political fortunes and gratify an inordinate ambition. The imperative necessity of the occasion had compelled the enlistment of the leaders of the hostile faction who had been injured beyond reparation, and whom it was equally dangerous to trust or further to offend. At the head of these were the sons and brothers of Witiza, who, while they repulsed the conciliatory overtures of Roderick, eagerly accepted a command which might promote their schemes of vengeance. Scores of those belonging to the noble and ecclesiastical orders, and the Jews to a man, inflamed with revenge and hatred, were in daily communication with the head-quarters of the enemy. The jealousy of rival commanders tended still further to impair the efficiency of the Christians, whose feuds and discontent being well known to their adversaries had a tendency to inspire the latter with a well-grounded hope of victory.

In the mean time, Tarik had seized and occupied the ancient town of Carteja, and, fortifying himself securely, sent foraging expeditions far and wide throughout the surrounding country. These were, without exception, successful, and the rapid movements of the Arab cavalry, their seemingly invincible character, and the valuable booty they secured, not only struck terror into the astonished natives, but greatly encouraged the main body of the invading army, encamped under the shadow of Gibraltar. The emissaries and secret allies of Tarik, who swarmed in the court and camp of Roderick, lost no time in apprising him of the preparations being made for his destruction. Alarmed by the accounts he received, he despatched a messenger to Musa for reinforcements. A detachment of five thousand Berber cavalry was sent to his aid, which with the remainder of his troops amounted to twelve thousand veterans; a mere handful when compared with the army of the Goths, but composed of warriors inured to privation, accustomed to conquer, inflamed with religious zeal, and bearing a devoted and unswerving attachment to their commander.

On the morning of a beautiful July day, in the year 711, the beginning of an era most notable in the annals of Spain, the hostile armies faced each other near Lake La Janda, upon the rolling plains of Medina-Sidonia. The Moors, flushed with the uniform success which had hitherto attended their arms, relying upon the dissensions of the enemy as much as upon their own valor, and impatient for the conflict, appeared in glittering mail, wearing snowy turbans, and equipped with sword and lance; while over their shoulders was suspended the Arabian bow, whose shafts, like those of the Parthian, made the archer all the more formidable in retreat. The Moorish general, after performing the rites of his faith, addressed his soldiers in a few stirring and well-chosen words. With consummate skill, he availed himself of the strongest passions which control humanity,—avarice, military glory, the love of woman, the priceless rewards of religious constancy. He revealed to them a dream, in which the Prophet had announced that the issue of the conflict would be favorable to the adherents of Islam, and which portended the confusion of the infidel. He placed before them their desperate position, where defeat implied annihilation, and victory was the only hope. He exhorted them to banish all thought of fear, and to rely upon their courage tested upon many fields of battle. He pictured in burning language the attractions of the country and the matchless charms of the Gothic houris who inhabited it. He repeated the passages of the Koran which promised that all the martyrs who fell in battle would at once receive the reward of their devotion amidst the ineffable delights of Paradise.

Upon the other hand, the bribes, the appeals, and the threats of Roderick had brought together the entire available military power of the Gothic monarchy. The King, surrounded by his nobles and escorted by his guards, displayed all the pomp and splendor of the Orient. He was borne to the front by white mules, upon a litter of ivory richly inlaid with silver, and sheltered by a canopy of many-colored silk; a purple cloak covered his shoulders, upon his head was the royal diadem, and his robes of cloth of gold were enriched with priceless jewels. The devices of the nobles marked the order of the various divisions, and in the rear was led a train of many thousand beasts of burden whose only loads were ropes with which to bind the prisoners. The details of the battle which changed the destiny of Western Europe are unusually meagre, even for the unlettered and credulous age in which it occurred. It seems to have consisted of a series of indecisive skirmishes which lasted eight days, during which time the two armies traversed a distance of twenty miles, to the neighborhood of the modern city of Jerez de la Frontera. Here, with amazing ignorance, or with fatal disregard of the elementary rules of military tactics, the Goths took up their position with the river Guadalete in their rear. Upon the final charge of the Arabs, the treason of the former partisans of Witiza became apparent. A large body of nobles with their retainers openly deserted; a panic ensued; and the vast array took to headlong flight. Pressing forward with the shrill war-cry of the Moslem, which struck terror into the defeated Goths, the Moorish squadrons drove the enemy into the rapid waters of the Guadalete. The carnage was terrible. Exasperated by days of fighting, and haunted by the constant jeopardy of servitude and death, the soldiers of Tarik gave no quarter. The ground was heaped with corpses. The channel of the river was choked with the dead and dying, with horses, and chariots, and camp equipage, with treasures which the fugitives vainly tried to save. Of the invaders, three thousand are said to have fallen, but no computation was made of the loss of the Goths. The remnants of the army which escaped the swords of the Arabs were pursued to the very gates of the neighboring cities. Many were cut to pieces before they could reach a place of safety; and finally, satiated with blood, the conquerors found upon their hands a great number of prisoners whom the ropes which they themselves had provided now served to secure. The war-horse of Roderick covered with trappings of great value was taken, but no trace remained of the King. One of his sandals, encrusted with rubies and emeralds, was found on the bank of the river, which would seem to indicate that he perished by drowning; but his body was never recovered, and his fate is a mystery; notwithstanding that Spanish romance and monkish credulity have invested his disappearance with many extravagant legends, attested by a formidable array of ecclesiastical evidence. The booty which fell into the hands of the Moslems was incalculable. The number of horses taken was so large that the entire army was mounted, thereby adding greatly to its efficiency. The housings of these animals—whose possession among the Goths implied the enjoyment of rank and fortune—were of the costliest description; many of the finest chargers were shod with silver or gold. The Gothic nobles, rather accustomed to vie with each other in the service of their tables, the size of their retinues, and the magnificence of their equipages than in valor and military knowledge, and little dreaming of the result, had brought with them their most valuable possessions in plate and jewels. Their love of ostentation caused them to surround themselves with multitudes of slaves, whose daily broils kept the camp in a continuous uproar, and between whom and the enemy existed a secret understanding, whose effects were fearfully manifested in the hour of disaster. All of this wealth, together with the ornaments and insignia of the royal household, became the spoil of the conqueror. The fifth, which according to the law of Islam belonged to the Khalif, having been set aside, the remainder was divided on the field, amidst the tumultuous acclamations of the exultant soldiery.

The battle of the Guadalete is justly ranked with the great and decisive victories of the world. Indeed, if we consider the relative number of the combatants, the duration of the action, and the importance of its results, it has no parallel in the annals of warfare. While the intrigues of unscrupulous factions contributed largely to the success of the Arabs, the fact must not be lost sight of, that the numbers of the latter were scarcely appreciable when compared with the vast masses of their antagonists, and that they labored under the additional disadvantage of fighting in the enemy's country. As to generalship, none could have been displayed on either side. The Moslems were little better than banditti, commanded by barbarians and renegades whose sole military experience had been acquired by predatory raids in the African Desert. The Goths, idle and effeminate in life, debilitated in body, cowardly, debased, and wholly unused to arms, were dominated by inordinate vanity and filled with contempt for their opponents. The tyranny, excesses, and arbitrary acts of Witiza having caused the exclusion of his posterity from the throne, the partisans of the latter were willing to sacrifice their country and their religion to insure the overthrow of the usurper and to satisfy their insatiable cravings for revenge.

Thus fell the enfeebled and tottering monarchy of the Goths. It had long survived its glory and its prestige. The severe political maxims of its founders, suited to the frigid regions of the Baltic, had been found incompatible with the physical and moral conditions imposed by the voluptuous climate of Bætica and Lusitania. Undermined by the vices of the nobility, by the turbulent ambition of the priesthood, by the treasonable machinations of the Jews, and by the supine indifference of the masses to any fate—provided only that it involved a change of masters—

the first shock of a determined enemy swept it from the face of the earth. In its stead arose a new empire and a strange dynasty of exotic origin, foreign alike in dress, in laws, in customs, in constitution, in religion. Far from being uncongenial, the meteorological conditions of the semi-tropical Peninsula, which have insensibly determined the manners, the policy, and the fate of so many races, were eminently favorable to the highest intellectual development of its people. Through the wise and noble ambition of its rulers was established that universal culture which made Cordova the intellectual centre from whence diverged those rays of light which illumined the darkness of the mediæval world. From the genius of its statesmen, the skill of its generals, and the prowess of its armies arose that constant apprehension of impending disaster, a portentous shadow, which, hanging over Europe like the imperfectly defined outlines of a gigantic spectre, threatened for centuries the overthrow of the Seat of St. Peter, and the destruction of that system of faith which had risen upon the ruins of Pagan idolatry and superstition.

Great and wide-spread was the consternation which seized the Goths after the rout of the Guadalete. The entire resources of the kingdom had been staked and lost. The sovereign had mysteriously disappeared. In the carnage of the field, and in that which had accompanied the still more disastrous retreat, the nobility had suffered so greatly that few, if any, of its members who were eligible to the throne had survived or remained at liberty. The sacred profession of the priesthood, which had encouraged by its presence and exhortations the flagging spirits of the soldiery, had not been able to protect them from the edge of the Moorish scimetar. The hatred and fanaticism of the invaders were aroused to frenzy by the sight of the vestments and insignia of the Church, and even the most venerable prelates were massacred; for the ferocious Moslem gave no quarter to the ministers of Christianity, and disdained even the menial services of those who had denounced to eternal perdition the followers of the Prophet. The accumulated wealth of generations, which the vanity and ostentation of the palatines had exhibited at the court, on the march, and in the camp, had been swept into the coffers of the victor. The fugitives who were so fortunate as to escape took refuge in the neighboring cities; whither they were soon followed by the peasantry, who beheld with dismay the sight of their burning homes and desolated fields. In one engagement, and virtually in a single day, one of the most populous and opulent countries of Europe had succumbed to the impetuous but desultory attack of an unknown foe. For the space of two centuries, and under far less favorable circumstances, the Carthaginian and Iberian provinces of the Peninsula had successfully defied the resources and the prestige of the Roman arms. For three centuries longer, the Visigoths, relying upon the traditions and military fame of their ancestors, had protected, without difficulty, their possessions wrested from the feeble hands of the Cæsars, and had repeatedly rolled back the tide of Frankish invasion from the slopes of the Pyrenees.

With the advent of overwhelming national misfortune, there fell upon the terror-stricken people the apathy of despair. The public wretchedness was augmented by the censures of the clergy, who, with characteristic effrontery, declared the invasion to be a divine punishment for the crimes of the wicked; crimes in which they themselves had not only participated, but by their shameless conduct had obtained an infamous pre-eminence in an age of unprecedented corruption.

The Moslems under the lead of the enterprising Tarik, who displayed the talents of a skilful general in his ability to profit by every advantage, lost no time in securing the fruits of victory. From the army—now a compact and active body of cavalry—were sent in all directions detachments to cut off straggling parties of the enemy, and to capture supplies destined for the overcrowded cities already threatened with the horrors of starvation.

Tidings of the wonderful success upon the plains of Jerez soon spread far and wide through the towns and provinces of Africa. Animated by the hope of plunder and glory, the Moslems, many of them abandoning their homes and making use of every available craft to cross the strait, flocked by thousands to the standard of Tarik. The latter, after thoroughly reorganizing his new recruits, and appointing to the command officers of tried fidelity and experience, took Sidonia. The strongly fortified city of Carmona next claimed his attention. As its reduction by the slow process of a siege was out of the question with the resources at his command, resort was had to stratagem. A squadron of the retainers of Count Julian, headed by that worthy in person, and apparently pursued by a body of the enemy, appeared before the walls. Shelter was at once given the fugitives, who in the dead of night killed the sentinels and opened the gates to the enemy. Thence Tarik advanced upon Ecija, where the greater portion of the survivors of the battle of the Guadalete had taken refuge. The Goths, disdaining the protection of their defences, and nerved to despair by their situation, which involved the alternative of slavery or famine, boldly encountered the Moslems in the field. The action was hotly contested, and although the loss sustained by the invaders was greater, in proportion to the number of combatants engaged, than any suffered during the Conquest, the

Goths were in the end defeated, and the city taken. Ecija swarmed with members of the monastic orders, and the nuns, who largely predominated, were famous for their beauty. The prospect of the infidel harem filled these pious virgins with horror; and they adopted the heroic expedient of mutilating their features, hoping by the sacrifice of their charms to preserve both their honor and their lives. The compassion of the Moslem freebooter, infuriated by this attempt to deprive him of his prey, was not moved by the evidences of saintly devotion; the sight of a conventual habit became the signal for outrage; death followed fast upon violence; and many hundreds of the self-mutilated spouses of Christ received the crown of martyrdom.

In the mean time, Musa had forwarded despatches to Damascus announcing the victory, but, actuated by the petty jealousy which formed such a prominent feature of his character, he carefully concealed from the Khalif the name of the successful commander. Having formed the determination to cross over to Spain and conduct the campaign in person, he sent peremptory orders to Tarik not to advance farther until he arrived. But the hero of the Guadalete, fully alive to the importance of affording the enemy no opportunity for rest and reorganization, and advised by Count Julian to march at once on Toledo, was of the opinion that the interests of his sovereign, as well as his own fortunes, would be promoted by disobedience of the commands of his superior. He therefore paraded his troops, and after enjoining them to make war only upon those actually in arms, to leave all non-combatants unmolested, and scrupulously to respect the religious prejudices of the people, set out for Cordova at the head of a numerous army. The latter city was strong and well defended, and Tarik, after nine days, seeing that the siege would probably be of long duration, left its conduct to his lieutenant, Mugayth-al-Rumi, and moved without delay upon Toledo. The governor of Cordova, who was of the royal blood of the Goths, and a brave and determined officer, inspirited by the departure of the main body of the enemy, made no question of his ability to defend the city against a force not greatly exceeding his own in numbers. But the good fortune which seemed to attend the Moslems upon every occasion did not desert them in the present emergency. Information was soon brought to Mugayth-al-Rumi of a weak point in the fortifications which might be scaled. Aided by a dark night and the noise made by a storm of hail, a detachment crossed the river under the guidance of a shepherd, and reached the place which had been indicated. A fig-tree which stood near the wall was mounted by an active soldier, who, unrolling his turban, drew up several of his comrades, who occupied the battlements without resistance; for the severity of the tempest had driven the sentries from their posts. Proceeding quietly and rapidly through the streets, the guard at the gates was surprised and cut to pieces, the army was admitted, and by daybreak the city was in the hands of the Moslems. The governor, with four hundred of the garrison, fled to the church of St. George, which stood outside the western wall, and being surrounded by a moat and supplied with water by a subterranean conduit from a spring in the neighboring mountains, offered all the obstacles of a fortress whose towers and barbicans could bid defiance to an enemy destitute of military engines and ignorant of the mode of conducting a siege. For a considerable time the Goths repulsed the attacks of the band of Mugayth-al-Rumi, until at last, after diligent search, the source of the water-supply having been discovered and the aqueduct cut, the besieged, reduced to extremity, were compelled to surrender. The majority of the garrison were permitted to join their countrymen in the North, but the officers and the governor —who was a personage of too great importance to be set at liberty—were retained in the camp of the victor.

Before leaving Ecija, Tarik had sent one of his officers, Zeyd-Ibn-Kesade, at the head of a considerable force, to overrun the southern portion of Andalusia. In this region, as elsewhere, the mysterious terror which attended the exploits of the invaders had preceded them. Baja, Antequera, Elvira, and the adjoining districts yielded almost without resistance, but Granada, relying upon its fortifications, refused to accept the proffered terms and was carried by storm. The small number of the Moslems rendered it impossible for them to leave garrisons in the captured towns, and the most important of the latter were placed in charge of Arab governors, with whom the Jews, who seemed to have thriven under persecution, engaged themselves to co-operate. So numerous was the Hebrew element in Granada that it was practically a Jewish community, and, with its aid, a single company was sufficient to hold in subjection a city of nearly a hundred thousand souls. Having accomplished the object of his expedition with trifling loss, loaded with rich booty, and accompanied by innumerable slaves of both sexes, Zeyd, sacking Jaen on his way, hastened to join Tarik at Toledo.

Eight months had elapsed since the battle of the Guadalete before the Moslem army appeared before the gates of the Visigothic capital. Perched upon a lofty eminence, and almost surrounded by the Tagus, whose current ran swiftly through a deep channel worn in the living rock, art had combined with nature to render its position impregnable. Walls built of stones of almost cyclopean dimensions environed it, and rose to a great height even on the side towards the river, where the precipitous cliffs themselves discouraged all attempts at escalade. The approach from the north had been protected by barbicans and outworks of double strength. These defences had been designed and perfected by Wamba, the last of the Gothic kings whose martial genius had, for a brief period, revived the glorious traditions and long forgotten exploits of the ancient dynasty. The imperial capital, a citadel in itself, where all the resources of a vast monarchy had been lavished and all the knowledge of military engineering of the age had been employed to insure the safety of the court, now trembled in the presence of a few thousand roving barbarians. The dread which was associated with the unknown enemy was augmented by the rapidity of his movements, which to the superstitious fears of the Visigoths made him appear ubiquitous. A sufficient military force had been available to defend this fortress, but the sentiments of patriotism, loyalty, and courage, so essential to the preservation of obedience and discipline, had disappeared. Instead of preparing for resistance, each individual thought only of his own preservation, when news arrived that the foe was approaching. The majority of the citizens, leaving their possessions, fled to Galicia and the Asturias. The lawless soldiers of the garrison pillaged the deserted houses, and stripped without hindrance the defenceless fugitives. The clergy, considering the evil as only temporary, walled up the treasures of chapel and convent in crypts, where to-day the greater portion of them still remain undiscovered. The primate, laden with the most precious effects of the churches, and leaving his ecclesiastical inferiors to contend for the prize of martyrdom offered by the infidel, accompanied his terrified parishioners in their flight, nor did he arrest his steps until safe within the walls of Rome. A disorderly rabble of priests and monks, actuated either by faith or indolence, remaining at their posts, endeavored to avert the impending calamity by fasting, prayer, and pilgrimage to the innumerable shrines situated both within and without the city. Unfortunately, however, no divine response was vouchsafed to these last frantic efforts of a despairing hierarchy. The waving pennons and sparkling lances of the Arab cavalry appeared in the distance, and their light and active squadrons swept around the walls. The fields were laid waste. The convents and the villas which embellished the suburbs were razed to the ground or burnt. Every unlucky straggler was compelled, at the point of the sword, to renounce the religion of his fathers or submit to the fate of a slave. In a town deserted by its garrison, half depopulated, without provisions, deprived of every prospect of relief, and principally occupied by non-combatants and Jews who were in sympathy with the enemy, no idea of resistance could be entertained. The usual conditions offered by the Moslems were eagerly accepted. All had permission to retire who desired to do so, with the understanding that such abandonment of their homes involved a forfeiture of every description of property. Those who preferred to remain were assured of protection, under payment of a reasonable tribute. Both Jews and Christians were indulged in the practice of their religious rites; but half of the churches were confiscated for the use of Islam, and no new houses of worship could be constructed without permission of the government. The tributaries were left subject to their own laws, enforced by their own tribunals, as long as these did not conflict with the policy of the dominant power. No impediments to proselytism were tolerated, and severe punishment was denounced against such as should offer intimidation or insult to Christian renegades. Such were the terms imposed upon the inhabitants of the Peninsula by the generous policy of the conqueror; a pleasing contrast to the brutality of the barbarians, the duplicity of Carthage, and the avarice and selfishness of Rome.

Notwithstanding the most valuable treasures of the imperial capital had been carried away by the fleeing population, the plunder secured by the Moslems was immense, and even their rapacity, ordinarily insatiable, was for once appeased. The variety and number of the precious objects which met their bewildered gaze was so great, that the rude warriors of the Atlas not infrequently turned aside from the splendid vestments and jewel-studded furniture destined for the service of the Church, to more portable and gorgeous baubles which caught their momentary fancy. It is related by the most accurate of the Christian and Moorish chroniclers, that two Berbers, having found an altar-cloth of gold brocade enriched with rows of hyacinths and emeralds which was too heavy for them to carry, cut out that portion containing the jewels and rejected the balance as worthless. Another, who had secured a golden vase filled with pearls, kept the precious receptacle, but, ignorant of their value, cast away its contents. In the cathedral were found many votive crowns of gold, each inscribed with the name of a Gothic king. The confusion incident to a hasty flight had left in the religious houses of every description a vast amount of wealth, which fell into the hands of the conqueror. An apartment was discovered in the palace occupied by Tarik which was literally filled with the treasures and royal insignia of the various dynasties which had for ages swayed the fortunes of the Visigothic monarchy. Chains and diadems, urns and uncut jewels, sceptres, richly decorated weapons, costly armor, robes of cloth of gold, have been enumerated among the spoil by the historians of the time; by the Christian, with regret and shame, by the Mohammedan, with all the exultation of victory.

After the surrender of the capital, Tarik, leaving the city in charge of his faithful adherents, the Jews, at once advanced northward in pursuit of the retreating Goths. The latter, in every instance when it was possible, upon the appearance of the cloud of turbaned horsemen, abandoned their burdens and took refuge in the mountain fastnesses. Overtaking a body of fugitives a short distance beyond Toledo, Tarik captured a magnificent table, or lectern—used to support the Gospels—which had belonged to the cathedral; whose origin the romantic credulity of that age attributed to Solomon, and supposed to be a portion of the booty brought by Titus from the sack of Jerusalem; but which more reliable accounts have demonstrated to have been the handiwork of Visigothic artisans. The body and framework of this precious jewel were of the purest gold. Into it were inserted alternate rows of hyacinths, rubies, pearls, and emeralds, and, as it was the custom of each monarch to contribute something to its embellishment, royal emulation had exhausted itself to surpass the efforts of preceding reigns in the decoration of an object whose sanctity made it more priceless in the eyes of the superstitious than even the inestimable value of its materials and ornamentation. It stood upon four feet, the latter being so encrusted with emeralds as to convey the impression that each was formed of a single stone. This table, whose estimated value was five hundred thousand crowns, and which has been described with such exaggeration as to have even aroused the doubts of historical critics concerning its existence, was set aside with the portion of the spoil destined for the Khalif.

The capture of Toledo was the last important exploit of the Berber general, whose success could not atone for the gross insubordination of which he was guilty. A few other cities had been taken, a large area of territory had been ravaged, when the news of the approach of Musa, and the anticipation of his commander's wrath, suddenly checked the career of Tarik in the full flush of conquest and glory.

The fame and popularity of the latter as well as the report of the vast riches amassed by him had excited, to the full measure of their malignity, the envy and the hatred of Musa. The adventurers who had hastened to Iberia to serve under the standard of Tarik had depleted the garrisons of Africa, and it was fourteen months after the main expedition had sailed before Musa was able to muster a sufficient force to take the field in person. Crossing the strait with a numerous body of troops—which included representatives of the most distinguished families of Arabia, many of whom had enjoyed the rare distinction of being friends of the Companions of the Prophet, as well as the flower of the African soldiery—he disembarked at Ghezirah-al-Khadra. His jealousy of the success of Tarik, and the certainty that the Berbers had left no city or hamlet unplundered in their march, led Musa to desire to proceed to Toledo by a different route. Informed of his wish, his guides promised to gratify him, and place within his power cities of far greater extent and magnificence than those which had submitted to his rebellious lieutenant. They conducted him first to Carmona, which, like most of the other towns of Andalusia, had cast off the Moslem yoke as soon as the departure of the army of Tarik had inspired its inhabitants with confidence; and this well-fortified place, despite its strength, seems to have at once yielded to the summons of the invader. Seville, then as now one of the largest, wealthiest, and most beautiful cities of Spain, was next besieged. One month sufficed to reduce it, but not without many bloody engagements, in which the Moslems sustained considerable loss. A garrison was left in the citadel, and Musa marched upon Merida, famous from the days of the Romans for its massive fortifications, its imposing public works, and the architectural grandeur and richness of its temples. Founded by the veterans of Augustus, and honored with his name, Merida still retained, in the eighth century, a few of the stupendous memorials of her pristine splendor, which nearly three hundred years before had so impressed the astonished barbarians of Germany, and now exerted their awe-inspiring influence upon the simple and superstitious tribesmen of Africa and Arabia. The partiality of the Roman emperors had lavished upon this provincial capital treasures that had enabled its citizens to raise structures rivalling those of Rome itself. Bridges, of such extraordinary length and huge proportions as to almost defy the efforts of modern science to demolish them, crossed the sandy bed of the sluggish Guadiana. Aqueducts, suspended upon tiers of graceful arches, traversed, high in air, the populous and highly cultivated plain. Monuments of the reigns of Hadrian and Trajan spanned the streets and towered in the forum. In the suburbs stood the theatre, the circus, and the naumachia; buildings worthy of the taste and grandeur of any city of the empire. The population was one of the most prosperous and opulent in the kingdom. The archiepiscopal see of Merida vied in dignity and influence with the primacy of Toledo. It had not been many years since the vassals and slaves of the metropolitan, to the number of nearly a thousand, glittering with jewels and cloth of gold, had dazzled the eyes of the populace, and excited the envy of the nobles, while participating in the ceremonial pageantry of the Church—exhibitions so well adapted to impress the beholder with the greatness, the pomp, and the resources of ecclesiastical power. Well might the enthusiasm of the predatory Arab be excited by the architectural magnificence and historic souvenirs of the far-famed capital of Lusitania! While the gigantic proportions of its edifices called forth his admiration, and led him to attribute their erection to giants and demons, his avarice was, at the same time, stimulated by the thought of the booty to be obtained by the pillage of a place of such extent and importance. But the inhabitants, worthy of the renown of their ancestors, and undismayed by the sudden appearance of an unknown foe, did not hesitate to engage him on equal terms. A series of combats followed, in which the valor of the besieged acquired for them a temporary advantage. In the face of such determined resistance, and wholly unacquainted with the methods of carrying on a siege, the Moslems began to falter. But their veteran commander, confident in his skill, now brought to bear the experience which he had acquired in many hard-fought campaigns in Syria and Africa. The city was completely blockaded. Every foraging party which issued from the gates was intercepted and captured or cut to pieces. The stratagems of Berber warfare were adopted to the confusion of an intrepid but unwary enemy. Detachments which sallied forth to attack the besieging lines were lured into ambush and annihilated. Military engines familiar to that age were constructed, but the activity and courage of the Visigoths were such that, although breaches were made, no forlorn hope could effect a lodgment within the fortifications; and one which succeeded in penetrating them—a circumstance which gave to the place where it occurred the suggestive name of the Tower of the Martyrs—

was destroyed to a man. Each day, with the rising of the sun, the battle was renewed, and Musa saw with rage and apprehension his well-tried veterans and the bravest of his officers perish before his eyes. The fortifications appeared impregnable; and had it not been for the opportune arrival of Abd-al-Aziz, the son of the Arab general, with a reinforcement of seven thousand cavalry and five thousand crossbowmen, the Moslems would have been compelled to abandon the undertaking. Disheartened by this change in their fortunes, and beginning to suffer from a scarcity of provisions, the inhabitants of Merida now made overtures for a surrender. Although in the position of suppliants, the envoys provoked the resentment of Musa by their demeanor, and several conferences were necessary before the citizens would condescend to accept the usual terms of capitulation. When all had been arranged and hostages delivered, the Moslem army took possession of the city. Great wealth fell into the hands of the grasping Musa, who appropriated as his slave Egilona, the captive widow of Roderick, a princess whose subsequent marriage to his son Abd-al-Aziz was the source of many calamities to his family and nation.

The heroic defence of Merida had inspired with the hope of freedom the cities of the South, upon whom the Moslem yoke but recently imposed sat lightly, and Seville, Malaga, Granada, and Jaen rose simultaneously in revolt. The attention of Musa was first directed to Seville, the latest and most valuable of his recent acquisitions. The rebels of that city had massacred thirty men of the garrison and put the rest to flight, while the Jews, true to the instincts of a people long degraded by servitude, not only refused to assist their allies, but hastened with cringing servility to make peace once more with their old oppressors. For this defection, a terrible retribution was exacted. Abd-al-Aziz carried the place by storm, and put to death without mercy every Christian and Hebrew male who was found within its walls. The Moslems, taught by experience the imperative necessity of colonization, and being now in sufficient numbers to justify a division of their forces, placed a strong garrison in Seville; while the confiscated lands were partitioned among the natives of Arabia the Happy present with the invading army, who hastened to take possession of the luxurious estates of the Gothic merchants and nobility. This was the first instance of the settlement of conquered territory by the natives of a particular country, afterwards so common under Mohammedan rule; a stroke of policy whose effects are to this day apparent in the traditions, the dialects, the customs, and the popular superstitions of the different provinces of Spain. Abd-al-Aziz easily reduced to obedience the remaining rebellious cities of Andalusia, which, colonized in like manner, remained ever faithful to their allegiance. A portion of Murcia was also occupied; and unusually advantageous terms were, at the surrender of Orihuela, accorded to the Christians through the address of the Gothic general Theodomir, whom, after the death of Roderick, a faction of the Goths had invested with the supreme command.

The authorities are so contradictory that it is impossible to ascertain how far into the enemy's country Tarik penetrated after the capture of Toledo. It is probable, however, that his operations were mere inroads, destitute of historical importance. The spirit of the nation was broken; its armies were scattered; its leaders killed or enslaved; its capital in the hands of the enemy. The subjugation of the Peninsula was virtually ended, and the successful general could well afford to rest upon his laurels and devise means to avert the just indignation of his superior, provoked by flagrant disobedience to his orders, an offence which under the strict regulations of military law was punishable with death.

The two captains met at Talavera, whither Tarik in his anxiety had advanced, attended by his officers and loaded with costly presents, the choicest spoil of the Visigothic capital. The envious spirit of Musa, however, was not to be appeased by gifts whose splendor only served to suggest the greater value of the plunder which he had lost. He assailed his insubordinate lieutenant with bitter reproaches, and, forgetting the magnitude of his recent services, even went so far as to remind him of his former servile condition by striking him in the presence of the entire army. Then placing him under arrest, he hurried to Toledo, and ordered him instantly to collect and deliver all the booty which had fallen into his hands at the surrender of the city. Of the latter, the so-called table of Solomon, whose fame had long before reached Musa, was by far the most valuable. Tarik, thoroughly cognizant of the baseness and injustice of his commander, and suspecting that he would appropriate as his own the credit of this important prize, with an astuteness worthy of his Berber origin, had secretly removed one of its emerald-studded feet. In this condition it was delivered to Musa, who, being assured that it was thus mutilated when found, had the missing foot replaced with one of gold; no jewels of corresponding size being obtainable, although the collections of individuals and the coffers of the Gothic treasury were diligently ransacked for that purpose. Musa, having secured the coveted booty, now deprived Tarik of his command, and threw him into a dungeon. The keen foresight of the Berber chieftain, who knew that such a step was only the prelude to assassination, did not abandon him in this trying emergency. Having, through the mediation of his friends, succeeded in bribing a messenger whom Musa despatched to Damascus, a special envoy was sent by the Khalif ordering the immediate release of the illustrious captain and his restoration to authority. With unconcealed reluctance Musa complied with the orders of his sovereign, and Tarik, relieved of his chains, resumed his duties amidst the acclamations of the troops. A temporary and apparent reconciliation was effected between the antagonistic leaders, who in public treated each other with courtesy, but in whose hearts smouldered the inextinguishable fires of mutual hatred, kindled by unpardonable wrong and baffled enmity. With united forces, eager for glory, they invaded Aragon. Each horseman was provided with a small copper pot, a leathern bag for provisions, and a bottle for water; the infantry carried nothing but their arms. The camp equipage was loaded on trains of pack-mules. Military and political considerations required and enforced the observance of the strictest discipline. Non-combatants were unmolested. Pillage was forbidden under pain of death, save in actual battle and during the storming of cities. The religious prejudices of the people were respected, and no property was destroyed except when resistance or violence was offered the troops. The province was overrun, and its capital, Saragossa, taken and settled by adventurers from Africa. Upon the inhabitants of this city Musa imposed a fine new in the annals of Islam, denominated the Contribution of Blood, which was exacted before the army entered the gates and exempted the conquered from annoyance. The Valley of the Ebro pleased the colonists, who intermarried with the people, and the governor, Hanash-Ibn-Ali, signalized his administration by the erection of a splendid mosque, vestiges of which still remain. Catalonia and Valencia next submitted to the common fate, and then the two generals, reversing their course, marched to the wild region of the West where, among the mist-enshrouded sierras of Galicia and the Asturias, the remnant of the Visigothic nation, led by its honored prelates and indomitable chieftains, had borne its venerated relics and its household gods; to lay under such unpromising auspices the foundations of a far grander and more powerful empire, destined in after years to command the admiration and the terror of the world.

The reports of Musa to the Khalif show that the Arabs fully appreciated the value and importance of their conquest. "In the clearness of the sky and the beauty of its landscape it resembles Syria; in softness of climate even Yemen is not its superior; in profusion of flowers and delicacy of perfumes it suggests the luxury of India; it rivals Egypt in the fertility of its soil, and China in the variety and excellence of its minerals," wrote the experienced veteran to whom the wealth and resources of both Asia and Africa were familiar. The multitude of captives acquired by the Moslems struck the old general with surprise. "It is like the assembly of nations on the Day of Judgment," he exclaimed; although he doubtless remembered that Mauritania had yielded its prisoners by the hundred thousand, and human chattels were so cheap that it was not an unusual occurrence for an able-bodied man to be sold in the bazaar of Kairoan for a handful of pepper. A female merchant, who dealt in trinkets and perfumes, left Toledo after its surrender with five hundred slaves in her train. Thirty thousand Christian maidens, selected for their beauty, were destined for the markets of the East. The Jews especially reaped a rich harvest from the misfortunes of their former oppressors. Profiting by the ignorance of the soldiers, they purchased for trifling sums the sacred utensils of the altar, the jewels which had graced the beauties of the court, and all the rich and costly appliances of Gothic luxury. From the Saracen conquest, with the enormous wealth it afforded them, dates the prominence subsequently attained by the Hebrews in the political and financial affairs of Europe.

The strange fatality which preserved for future greatness and renown the broken fragments of the Visigothic monarchy, even now at the very outset, when it seemed inevitable that the entire Peninsula should become Mohammedan, asserted its mysterious power. Tarik had reached Astorga and Musa was still at Lugo, when a message was delivered from the Khalif Al-Walid ordering both generals to return to Damascus. This step had been resolved upon, not so much on account of the mutual hostility of the two leaders which, manifested even in their despatches, seriously impaired the prestige of the Moslem arms and menaced the stability of the Moslem conquests, as from fear lest the ambition of Musa might lead him to usurp the sovereignty of the newly acquired possessions. Prudential considerations also prevented the appointment of Tarik as governor of the Peninsula. His popularity was even greater than that of Musa, and the remote situation of the conquered territory was but too favorable for the establishment of an independent monarchy, whose subjection in case of rebellion would be difficult, if not impossible. The aspiring genius of the veteran commander had formed a vast scheme of conquest, a project so grand as at first sight to appear extravagant, yet which, after careful examination, might be considered far from impracticable. It was his wish to emulate the example and surpass the achievement of Hannibal by traversing Europe, and to meet before the walls of Constantinople an army which could co-operate with him in the siege and capture of the

Byzantine capital. Had this gigantic design been realized, the domain of the Khalifate of Damascus would have far exceeded the limits of the Roman Empire. He had seen with what ease the Visigothic kingdom, possessed of incalculable wealth, and animated by the military traditions of three centuries, had been subverted in a day. The unprecedented success of their recent military operations had induced the fanatical and credulous soldiery to regard themselves as the special favorites of Allah. It was moreover a matter of common notoriety that the able chieftain who had crushed, and then converted, the hitherto independent tribes of the Libyan Desert and the Atlas Mountains, and swept resistlessly over the plains of the Peninsula, had, in campaigns which extended over an entire generation, never failed in an enterprise or lost a battle. The very mention of a crusade against the infidel roused the wildest passions in the Moslem's heart. Unlimited treasure was available for any undertaking, however extensive; a consideration of but little moment, however, with a force accustomed to be paid in booty, and whose subsistence was wrested from the enemy. The barbarian monarchy of France, perpetually vexed by internal dissensions, was not likely to offer more serious impediments to invasion than those which had vanished before the tempest of the Guadalete. Was it then chimerical for Musa to hope that, with the combined aid of his own genius and the invincible prowess of his veterans, he might add to the domains of the successor of Mohammed the fairest regions of Europe, in the very seat of the Papacy proclaim from the towers of the Eternal City the doctrines of Islam, and, passing eastward, exchange greetings upon the shores of the Bosphorus with his friends and brethren of Syria? This plan of conquest, doubtless suggested by the invasion of the Carthaginian general, but which promised far more important results, owing to the thoroughly disorganized condition of the provinces once constituting the Roman Empire, an enterprise worthy of the ambition and daring of any military leader, was unhesitatingly condemned by the suspicious Khalif, who saw in its successful execution the portentous menace of a rival monarchy. With inexpressible grief and vexation, yet, to some degree, sustained by the hope that a personal interview might accomplish what written explanation had failed to do, Musa prepared to obey the mandate of his sovereign. In furtherance of this resolution, and to gratify a not unreasonable vanity, he determined to parade before the court and populace of Damascus the trophies of Africa and Spain with a pomp proportionate to the splendor of those conquests.

A general rendezvous was appointed at Seville, now designated as the capital of the kingdom, by reason of its proximity to the sea, and its ease of access to the Moslem settlements of Africa. There were assembled the spoil of palaces, the sacrilegious plunder of churches, the booty of many a battle-field, the throngs of noble captives, the insignia of fallen royalty. Ponderous vehicles were constructed for the conveyance of this treasure, whose value for once exceeded the wildest estimates of Oriental exaggeration. When all was ready, Musa, having appointed his son Abd-al-Aziz viceroy during his absence, crossed over to Ceuta. In obedience to orders issued previously to his arrival, every town of Al-Maghreb in the line of march contributed its contingent to increase the magnificence of the triumph. The fierce chieftains of Mauritania trooped after the victor in the character of warriors, proselytes, or slaves. Heaped in picturesque confusion upon endless strings of camels were the primitive spoils of the Desert—rude weapons, defensive armor, wearing apparel, and coarse trappings upon which had been lavished all the resources of barbaric decoration. Hundreds of the wild and beautiful Kabyle maidens, selected for their superior charms and fettered with chains of gold, toiled wearily along the dusty roads which ultimately led to the distant harems of Syria. Four hundred Gothic nobles, in whose veins coursed the royal blood, clothed in gorgeous robes secured by golden girdles, and crowned with diadems, represented the departed fortunes of the dynasties of Iberia. Thirty wagons hardly sufficed to convey the enormous quantities of gold, silver, and precious stones—objects of public ostentation, private luxury, and personal adornment—the gem-encrusted receptacles of the Host, the costly vessels of the mass, besides other and innumerable mementos of the most finished efforts of Visigothic opulence and Byzantine art. Among the guards of Musa, splendidly equipped, rode descendants of the proudest families of the Koreish, and the most distinguished officers of the Moslem army. In the rear of this brilliant cavalcade followed, to the number of more than a hundred thousand, the less important captives taken in the campaigns of Africa and Spain.

Arrived at Kairoan, Musa divided the government of Africa among his three sons Abdallah, Abd-al-Melik, and Abd-al-Ala, in the hope of perpetuating in his family the authority which he realized that he now held by an uncertain tenure, and then resumed his journey.

Tidings of his approach having preceded him, the wanderers of the Desert and the inhabitants of the cities of the coast alike poured forth in countless multitudes to do him honor. It was a strange and impressive spectacle, one which had not been seen since the laurel-crowned victor, preceded by his trophies and his captives, had traversed the streets of Rome amid the acclamations of the populace, to deposit his offerings upon the shrine of the Capitoline Jupiter. With the progress of the triumphal procession the number of curious spectators increased, reaching its culmination at Cairo, where the way was blocked by the teeming myriads from the banks of the Nile. During the course of the journey, Musa, elated beyond measure by the adulation heaped upon him, was prompted to the commission of an act of tyranny which seriously prejudiced his fortunes. Desirous of neglecting no opportunity of magnifying his importance, and utterly unscrupulous in appropriating the credit due to others, he demanded of Mugayth-al-Rumi the captive governor of Cordova, whom the latter held as his slave, and designed as a present to the Khalif. Upon the refusal of that officer to comply with his demand, Musa ordered the immediate execution of the Gothic prince, and by this deed of violence and injustice increased the enmity of Mugayth-al-Rumi, whose sympathies had already been enlisted on the side of Tarik, his friend and former comrade in arms.

Hardly had Musa passed the borders of Syria, when there was placed in his hands a secret message from Suleyman, heir presumptive of the Khalifate, announcing the fatal illness of his brother Al-Walid, and desiring him not to advance further until he received authentic information of the death of his sovereign. Suleyman was induced to make this request, not only on account of the prestige which his accession to the throne would derive by the public exhibition of the vast plunder of the nations of the West, but also because the personal gifts presented to the family of the Khalif, presumably of immense value, would be lost to his successor. Musa, however, whose native tact and shrewdness seem to have been diminished by age and disappointment, paid no attention to the representations of Suleyman; and without an hour's delay marched on to Damascus. He entered the city on

Friday, and proceeding to the great mosque, where Al-Walid was at prayer, entered at the head of the captive nobles and chieftains, all of whom were clothed in the costumes of their respective countries and adorned with the insignia of their rank. After the service the Khalif embraced Musa, clothed him with his own robe, and presented him with fifty thousand dinars, in addition to pensioning his sons and the most worthy of his subordinates. The inferior captives and the royal fifth were then placed in the custody of the officers of the Treasury. The wonderful table was, as Tarik had conjectured it would be, claimed by Musa, who, on being interrogated concerning the golden foot, declared it was in that condition when he found it. Thereupon, Tarik, who was present, advanced, claimed the honor of the capture, and after relating the stratagem he had practised, produced the missing portion in corroboration of his testimony, to the speechless rage and confusion of his rival. Al-Walid, who estimated this work of art solely by the value of its materials, caused the jewels to be removed, and then sent the frame of the table as an offering to the temple of Mecca.

Forty days after Musa's arrival at Damascus Al-Walid died, and Suleyman ascended the throne. The latter, notorious for the ferocity of his disposition and the vulgarity and gluttony of his tastes, lost no time in imposing upon Musa the full weight of his displeasure. The first judicial act of his administration was the arraignment of the veteran general, now more than eighty years of age. The evidence of corruption, extortion, and tyranny, to which Musa could make but a feeble defence, having been presented, he was found guilty, sentenced to be stripped of his property, and required to pay a fine of two hundred thousand pieces of gold. In addition to this severe penalty, he was also forced to remain chained to a post under a blazing sun, as a punishment for having publicly reproached the Khalif for his ingratitude. Through the intercession of friends he was released after many hours of torture, and permitted to retire from the court, accompanied by a single faithful slave. His remaining years were passed in poverty; dependent upon alms, he begged his bread from the Bedouin tribes, putting aside every dirhem he could obtain to be applied to the payment of his fine, until he died in abject wretchedness at Wada-al-Kora, a remote settlement of Arabia. Such was the miserable end of one of the greatest military leaders Islam ever produced. His courage was dauntless, his sagacity almost amounted to inspiration, his resources were inexhaustible. His zeal, which bordered upon fanaticism, assured him of the favor of Allah, and infused into his troops the most unbounded confidence in his genius. The bursts of his oratory rivalled in eloquence and enthusiasm the rhetorical efforts of the greatest preachers of the age. He observed the ceremonial of his faith with scrupulous diligence. His prudence and the accuracy of his perceptions were proverbial. In all his experience, where he held command in person, no enemy ever prevailed over him. His suspicious nature and intuitive knowledge of mankind made him more than a match for statesmen whose lives had been passed in the atmosphere of courts. Increasing his wealth by the most questionable methods, he excluded his companions from all participation in his prosperity, and under his incessant peculation the royal revenues were sensibly diminished, an offence which more than all others insured his ruin. Thus, in spite of his extraordinary talents, his avarice—whose gratification no bond of friendship, no obligation of loyalty, no precept of religion, and no fear of punishment could restrain—proved his destruction, and the famous commander who had acquired kingdoms, and accumulated wealth which excited the envy of princes, died poor and despised; an outcast in the centre of a barren and lonely region far from the scenes of his glory, and an object of curiosity and compassion to the barbarian shepherds and brigands of the Desert. History is silent as to the fate of Tarik after the settlement of his controversy with Musa. Had he been prominent thereafter in either good or evil fortune, it is certain that the Arabian chroniclers would have mentioned the fact. It is probable that he was permitted to pass the remainder of his life in obscurity and comfort, if not in luxury; and it is beyond question that he was not intrusted with any important employment; for the jealous court of Damascus feared the ambition and the ability of the distinguished general who had achieved the most splendid conquest of his time. And thus disappeared from the stage of the world the second of those noted characters to whom was due the acquisition of the beautiful land of Iberia by the crown of the Khalifate. Of Count Julian, the third and last of them, whom the undiscerning prejudice of monkish writers and the animosity of churchman and Spaniard, intensified by baffled ambition and injured pride, have for thirty-six generations branded with the name of traitor, we have accounts but little less unsatisfactory. His nationality, his antecedents, his relations to the Goths, the origin of his appointment as governor of Ceuta, the scope of his authority, his obligations to the court of Toledo, are, for the most part, matters of conjecture. Even the story of the outrage to his family, the immediate cause of his defection, though supported by the testimony of almost every Arab chronicler, has been disputed. There are excellent reasons for presuming that he occupied the position of a mere tributary of the King of the Visigoths, and had voluntarily surrendered his daughter as a pledge of his fidelity. Under these circumstances his allegiance could not have been deeply grounded; and his conduct appears under a less odious aspect than the treason of an hereditary vassal would have done, especially when it is remembered that he was not the aggressor. The general and unqualified abhorrence with which his name is associated can be traced to ecclesiastical writers, who have neglected no opportunity to blacken the character of every political adversary, heretic, and apostate in the eyes of posterity.

After the Conquest, Count Julian retired to Ceuta, which city, with a portion of the contiguous territory, was erected into a principality and bestowed upon him as a reward for his services. Notwithstanding his intimate Mohammedan associations, he and his immediate descendants remained steadfast in the Christian faith. The preponderating influence of Islam was, however, shown in the second generation of his descendants; and his great-grandson Abu-Suleyman-Ayub, who lived in the tenth century, and had studied under the greatest doctors of the time, became famous as one of the most acute and learned expounders of Moslem jurisprudence. The posterity of Tarik was known and esteemed for several centuries in Spain, until his identity and remembrance were finally lost in the civil wars and proscriptions which accompanied the establishment of the dynasty of the Almohades.

The engagements entered into with their allies were performed by the Moslems with scrupulous fidelity. Oppas was rewarded with the government of Toledo. The royal demesnes, amounting to three thousand of the richest estates of the kingdom, were restored to the House of Witiza. Many benefits at once resulted to the masses from the Arab conquest. The condition of the serfs was greatly improved. Tribute was regulated by law, and ceased to be dependent upon the capricious demands of avarice. The burdens of taxation were, however, still excessive; the cultivator paid four-fifths of the products of the land to the owner; from those who tilled the public domain—which comprised a fifth part of the conquered territory—one-third of the results of all manual industry was exacted. The tax of the landed proprietor was approximately twenty per cent. of his income, that of the tributary Christian varied from twelve to forty-eight dirhems—sixteen to sixty-four dollars—a year. A treaty, whose provisions determined the obligations of lord and serf, of subject and sovereign, and signed by Tarik and the representatives of the Gothic nobility before the arrival of Musa, was subsequently ratified by the government of Damascus. Upon this treaty were based all the laws which governed the tributaries in the Peninsula during the long period of Moslem dominion.

Less than fourteen months sufficed for the complete and irrevocable overthrow of the Visigothic empire. Within two years, the authority of the Moslem was firmly established from the Mediterranean to the Pyrenees. History presents no similar instance of the celerity, the completeness, the permanence of conquest. Political discord, social disintegration, the uncertainty of government, the insubordination of the noble, the rapacity of the priest, the despair of the slave, were among the most important aids to Mohammedan success. The aspirations of all not included in the privileged orders were repressed by the inexorable tyranny of caste. The middle class, from whose exertion and industry is necessarily derived the prosperity of a nation, had long been absorbed by the vast body of serfs whose labors contributed to the wealth, and whose numbers swelled the retinues, of the palatine and the bishop. The same conditions prevailed which had three centuries before heralded the fall of the

Roman Empire. Force dominated everything. The spirit of individual freedom, the most prominent feature of the Teutonic constitution, had become extinct. The royal prerogative was subordinated to the claims of the nobility, the latter—not, however, without protest—had fallen under the dominion of the priesthood. The prospect of affluence, the enjoyment of power, the indulgence of luxury, were most easily obtained through the avenues of ecclesiastical preferment. A long peace, attributable largely to geographical isolation, had removed alike the necessity for martial exercises and the incentives to military distinction. Concentration of power, in spite of apparent anarchy, in the end tending to the exercise of absolute despotism, had become the controlling principle of government. Yet all of these evidences of national decadence are scarcely adequate to explain the sudden collapse of a great monarchy. Disappointed ambition, organized treason, the wholesale defection of the Jews, contributed their weighty influence to hasten and complete the catastrophe. Among the Visigoths, patriotism, a quality necessarily dependent upon individual attachment to one's country, was unknown. Public spirit had been supplanted by a thirst for authority, in the gratification of which all moral considerations were ignored. The facility with which the Peninsula was won offers a suggestive contrast to the enormous difficulties which attended its reconquest. The fate of the Visigothic domination was determined in a week. After two short years, nothing remained of its greatness but the melancholy souvenirs of an enslaved people. The conquerors, in their turn, underwent the same experience. The irreconcilable elements of which they were composed, from the very beginning disclosed the defects of their polity which portended inevitable destruction. These elements were far more active and dangerous than those that had undermined the strength of the Gothic state. Nevertheless, it required many centuries of conflict to expel from Western Europe the race whose light-armed horsemen had, almost without resistance, swept the country from Bætica to Provence, from the mountains to the sea.

Thus passed into the hands of another branch of the Semitic race a country which, in former ages, had long flourished under the rule of Tyre and Carthage. Its attractions had been for centuries the theme of every poet, its wealth the aim of every conqueror. Despite repeated changes of government, invasions, conspiracies, revolutions, in its inaccessible fastnesses, its autochthons, the Basques, had preserved unimpaired their liberty and their national characteristics, a fate which distinguished them from all the other nations of Europe. On the fields of the Peninsula the most renowned soldiers of Rome had learned the art of war. The highest civilization of the Teutonic race had been attained in its cities. In its tribunals the most complete system of jurisprudence the world had until then known was perfected. The dignity of its ecclesiastical councils had maintained their independence, and enabled the Spanish hierarchy to withstand alike the insidious plots and the aggressive usurpations of the Papacy. But, of the many races of strangers which had established themselves within its borders, none had been of such a pronounced and original type as that which now occupied all but a small corner of its ample domain. The causes which led to, and the results which proceeded from, this national catastrophe present one of the most curious phases of civil organization and mental development. That an exotic people should at one blow overturn a monarchy of three centuries' duration is certainly extraordinary. But that this same people, who possessed nothing in common with the vanquished, no acquaintance with the arts, no knowledge of civilization, should, in a few years, found an empire whose inhabitants had already become eminent in every accomplishment which renders nations learned, illustrious, and powerful, and be able to take precedence of all their contemporaries, is far more extraordinary. For an extended period, the affairs of the Peninsula had been ripe for a domestic upheaval. Little respect remained among the masses for the traditions of a monarchy once elective, now nominally hereditary, but whose crown was always obtainable by purchase, assassination, or intrigue. The piety of the priesthood had been supplanted by an insatiable thirst for temporal power. In every part of the body politic flourished antagonistic religious doctrines, racial prejudices, factious opinions, and discordant social interests. The military spirit had disappeared. The authority of the civil magistrate was despised. The enforcement of the laws was regulated according to the rank and influence of the offender rather than by the measure of his guilt. Rival candidates for the throne contended for the glittering prize with all the infamous arts of the conspirator and the demagogue. Organized bands of robbers preyed upon the defenceless; and their chieftains, disdaining disguise, stalked insolently through the streets of the great cities. Boundless luxury and misgovernment had brought in their train a degree of corruption which equalled that caused by the worst excesses of the Cæsars. The labors of the husbandman for two successive seasons had been fruitless, and hunger and disease in their most fearful form contributed in no small degree to the accumulated misery of the nation. In every community the members of a united and isolated sect under the ban of sanguinary laws, yet still powerful in intellect, in wealth, and in political craft, labored as one man for the humiliation of their enemies and their own emancipation. At first the invasion was considered as a mere inroad, and no one supposed that the occupation of the country would be permanent. With the settlement of colonies, the opening of seaports to the commerce of the East, the partition of lands, and the erection of mosques, however, the Visigoths recognized the full extent of the calamity which had befallen them. But the moderation of their new rulers tempered the bitterness of defeat. The payment of tribute, proportioned to the degree of resistance or obedience to the laws, insured protection to the humblest peasant. The orthodox zealot was allowed to perform the ceremonies of his ritual without interference; the heretic could offer his petitions without apprehension from the furious efforts of sectarian hatred. Ecclesiastical dignitaries exercised in peace the functions of their calling, and the monkish chronicler penned fierce anathemas against his indulgent masters within hearing of the call to prayer from a hundred minarets. The accounts of Catholic writers, in which the most flagrant outrages are attributed to the Saracens, are manifestly exaggerations or falsehoods. Still, there can be no doubt that the inevitable accidents of warfare were productive of much suffering. An inconsiderable number of monks, whose clamors and insulting demeanor made them conspicuously offensive, were martyred. A few hundred nuns exchanged the orthodox companionship of canons and bishops for the delights of the seraglio. Fields of grain were given to the torch. Magnificent villas were levelled with the ground. Altars were despoiled of their treasures and sacred relics trodden under foot. But no pledge of security was violated; and absolute immunity in person, property, and religion was afforded by timely submission —a privilege appreciated by the majority of the people, and contemned only by intemperate fanatics who cursed the generous enemy whose prosperity they shared and whose indulgence they abused.

The ancient judicature was respected, and its regulations, subordinated to the legal procedure of the ruling power, were permitted to prevail among the vanquished, so far as they did not directly conflict with those of the Code of Islam. By its example of equity, toleration, and mercy, the new government rapidly gained the attachment of its subjects; the Jew prospered, the Christian forgot his bigotry, and the slave eagerly repeated the formula which released him from bondage and placed him on an equality with kings.

In the dark recesses of the cloister, without knowledge of the outer world, without gratitude for the clemency which permitted him to live, without appreciation of the increasing benefits of civilization, the surly friar, alone in his malice and his ignorance, nourished a spirit of sullen animosity, and with scourge and haircloth performed his frequent penance; listening, with a vague foreboding of even greater evil to his Church and order, to the muezzin's daily repetition of that ominous monotheistic maxim —ever before the eyes of the fanatic Moslem, whether it appeared carved amidst the marble foliage of his temples, or, emblazoned upon his banners in letters of gold, it glittered in the van of his victorious armies —" There is no God but the Immortal, the Eternal, who neither begets nor was begotten, and who hath neither companion nor equal."

CHAPTER VI

THE EMIRATE

713–755

Abd-al-Aziz—His Wise Administration—His Execution ordered by the Khalif—Ayub-Ibn-Habib—His Reforms—Al-Horr—Al-Samh—His Invasion of France—His Defeat and Death—Abd-al-Rahman—Feud of the Maadites and Kahtanites—Its Disastrous Effects—Anbasah-Ibn-Sohim—His Ability—He penetrates to the Rhone and is killed—Yahya-Ibn-Salmah — Othman-Ibn-Abu-Nesa — Hodheyfa-Ibn-al-Awass — Al-Haytham-Ibn-Obeyd — Mohammed-Ibn-Abdallah—Abd-al-Rahman—His Popularity—Proclaims the Holy War—Treason of Othman-Ibn-Abu-Nesa—The Emir attempts the Conquest of France—Character of Charles Martel—Battle of Poitiers—Death of Abd-al-Rahman—Abd-al-Melik—Okbah-Ibn-al-Hejaj—His Wisdom and Capacity—Charles Martel ravages Provence—Berber Revolt in Africa — Victory of the Rebels — Abd-al-Melik-Ibn-Kottam — Balj-Ibn-Beschr — Thalaba — Abu-al-Khattar—Condition of Western Europe—Unstable and Corrupt Administration of the Emirs—Importance of the Battle of Poitiers.

THE principle of hereditary right, although it occupied no place in the polity of Mohammed, was denounced by the Koran, and repudiated by the Arabs of ancient times, had been, since the dynasty of the Ommeyades attained to power, to a certain extent tacitly recognized by the subjects of the khalifs. Although the latter dignity was among orthodox Mussulmans still elective, like the office of an Arab sheik, the Persian schismatics had, for some generations, accustomed themselves to consider the descendants of Ali as the only legal Successors of the Prophet, to whom had been transmitted the inalienable prerogatives of regal power and even the sacred attributes of divinity. The ambition of the sovereigns of Damascus had been occasionally gratified by the accession of their sons to the throne, a result not unfrequently accomplished by means of questionable character. When the loyalty of the nobles and the obsequious devotion of the multitude were not sufficient to enable him to attain the desired end, the Khalif did not hesitate to use bribery, threats, and even assassination, to perpetuate the coveted dignity in his family. From the monarch this natural principle—a species of hero-worship, so common as to be almost universal, and exhibiting its tendencies even in the administration of the greatest of modern republics—descended to the prominent officials of the empire and to their subordinates the walis, the governors of provinces and cities. For these reasons, the appointment by Musa of his three sons to be respectively emirs of East and West Africa and Spain was regarded by the Moslem population of those countries and by the army as the exercise of a prescriptive right which scarcely required the formal confirmation of the sovereign. Notwithstanding the ferocious and jealous temper of Suleyman, and the fact that he had heaped upon Musa injuries which were unpardonable, he, for some time, permitted the sons of the conqueror of Al-Maghreb and Andaluz to exercise without molestation the functions of their several emirates. Abd-al-Aziz, to whom had been assigned the difficult task of the political reorganization of the Peninsula,—a task which involved the erection of one system of government upon the ruins of another which had nothing in common with, and much that was hostile to, it,—entered upon his duties with all the energy and tact of an accomplished soldier and statesman. Some cities removed from the immediate influence of the conquerors had renounced their allegiance and refused the customary tribute. These were speedily reduced to submission. The convention of Musa with Theodomir, the Gothic tributary of Murcia, was solemnly ratified. Detachments under different commanders were despatched to the North and West, who carried the Moslem arms to the shores of Lusitania and the mountains of Biscay and Navarre. Castles were built for the protection of the frontiers, and garrisons of important towns placed under the command of experienced officers of tried fidelity. A Divan or Council was established. Receivers of taxes and magistrates were appointed to conduct the civil departments of the administration. Secure in the protection of their own laws and the enjoyment of their ancient religious privileges, the Mohammedan yoke was hardly felt by the Christian population, whose restrictions were confined to a show of outward respect for the institutions of their masters and the regular payment of tribute. All acts of violence and oppression were punished, and public confidence was restored. The peasants rebuilt their cottages; the labors of the agriculturist, interrupted by civil commotion and foreign encroachment, were resumed; the grass-grown thoroughfares of the cities once more echoed with the welcome sounds of traffic, and the sad traces of many successive years of warfare and devastation began to gradually disappear from the face of the Peninsula.

But, however equitable was the civil administration of Abd-al-Aziz, its beneficent effects in the eyes of both Moslems and Christians were more than neutralized by the excesses and licentious violence of his private life. In the gratification of passions strong even for an Oriental, his conduct surpassed the ordinary limits of brutal tyranny. The fairest maids and matrons of the Gothic population crowded his seraglio; and even the homes of noble Arabians were not secure from the visitations of his eunuchs. Egilona, the queen of Roderick, having fallen into his hands, became first his concubine and afterwards his wife. She was indulged in the practice of her religion, an unusual privilege for one in her position; and, by the unbounded influence she soon acquired over her husband, succeeded in sensibly alleviating the miseries of her countrymen. Her beauty, her vast wealth, which she had secured by a timely submission and the payment of tribute, and her talents, which appear to have been of no mean order, added to the ambition once more to sit upon a throne, soon made themselves felt in the affairs of government. She began to direct the policy of the Emir, to the disgust and apprehension of the members of the Divan and the officers of the army. She imprudently attempted to introduce the ceremonial of the Visigothic court, which required the prostration of all who approached the throne of the monarch; a custom repugnant as yet both to the equality and independence recommended by the precepts of the Koran and to the proud spirit of the Arab. By her advice the treaty was concluded with Theodomir, who thereby acquired for life the sovereignty of the beautiful province of Murcia. The exercise of such authority was considered by pious Moslems as boding ill to the empire of Islam when enjoyed by a woman and an infidel. The rumor spread that Abd-al-Aziz, helpless under the fatal spell of this sorceress, was meditating apostasy and aspiring to independent power. These reports, which derived some color of probability from the universal belief of the multitude, the personal popularity and well-known ambition of the Emir, and his presumed desire to avenge the wrongs of his father, were communicated to the Khalif, who determined to at once remove all danger from any designs of the sons of Musa. Orders were accordingly despatched to five of the principal officers of the army of occupation in Spain to put Abd-al-Aziz to death. The first who opened and read the commands of the Khalif was Habib-Ibn-Obeidah, an old and valued friend of the family of Musa. His distress may be imagined; but the order was peremptory, and the ties of friendship, the sentiments of gratitude, the reminiscences of social intimacy, were not to be considered by the devout Moslem when was interposed the imperious mandate of the Successor of the Prophet of God. Having consulted with each other, the executioners, who feared the vengeance of the army, devoted as it was to its chief, determined to kill Abd-al-Aziz while at his devotions. It was the custom of the Emir to pass much of his time at a summer palace in the suburbs of Seville, attached to which was a private mosque. Here, while upon his knees reciting the morning prayer, he was attacked and despatched without resistance. His body was buried in the court of the palace, and his head—a sanguinary proof of the obedience of his assassins—was sent in a box filled with camphor to Suleyman at Damascus. Thus perished one of the most distinguished captains of the age, whose talents and dexterity promised a rapid solution of the difficult questions of policy which confronted the new rulers of Spain, and whose gentle and considerate treatment of the vanquished—conspicuous amidst the repulsive asperity of barbarian manners—proved his destruction. A few weeks elapsed, and his brethren, the emirs of Africa, followed him by the hand of the executioner. The fate of his unfortunate consort, Egilona, is unknown. In common with King Roderick and his conqueror Tarik, with Count Julian and the sons of Witiza, her future, after a remarkable career, passes into oblivion. It is not a little singular that so many of the most conspicuous personages of their time should all, one after another, without any apparent reason, have been thus abruptly dismissed by the chroniclers of the age.

The Khalif, in his haste to destroy the family of Musa, had neglected to designate a successor to Abd-al-Aziz, and Spain remained for a short time without a governor. Realizing the dangers of a protracted interregnum among the heterogeneous elements of which the inhabitants of the Peninsula were composed, a number of the Moslems most eminent in rank and influence assembled, and, in accordance with the ancient custom of the Desert, elected Ayub-Ibn-Habib provisional Emir. Ayub was a captain of age and experience and the cousin of Abd-al-Aziz. His first act was to remove the seat of government from Seville to Cordova, on account of the more advantageous location of the latter city, destined to remain during the domination of the conquerors the Mecca of the Occident, the literary centre of the Middle Ages, the school of polite manners, the home of science and the arts; to be regarded with awe by every Moslem, with affectionate veneration by every scholar, and with mingled feelings of wonder and apprehension by the turbulent barbarians of Western Europe. For greater convenience in collecting the revenue and restraining the indigenous population, the country had been divided into numerous districts, governed by walis, inferior officials responsible to the Emir. The lives of these magistrates, passed amidst the turmoil of revolution, the sack of cities, and the slaughter of infidels, rendered them but ill qualified to administer the affairs of a nation in time of peace. The acts of cruelty and extortion perpetrated by these petty tyrants, far removed from the eye of the court, had become an intolerable grievance. It devolved on Ayub to investigate their official conduct, and many of them were deposed and punished. The new Emir travelled through his dominions, correcting abuses, building fortresses, repairing the decaying walls of cities, encouraging the development and cultivation of fields long since abandoned by the farmer, redressing grievances without distinction of creed or nationality, and by every means promoting the welfare of his grateful subjects. In those provinces which had been depopulated, he established colonies of immigrants and adventurers from Africa and the East. In others, where the Christians preponderated, he settled numbers of Jews and Moslems, whose presence might curb the enthusiasm and check the aspirations of the implacable enemies of the Mohammedan faith. The watch-towers which crowned the summits of the Pyrenees and defended the passes leading to Narbonnese Gaul—that region of mystery which the imperfect geography of the Arab had designated the Great Land, and the imagination of the Oriental had peopled with giants and fabulous monsters—were strengthened and garrisoned with troops whose activity and vigilance had been tested in many a scene of toil and danger. Scarcely had the administration of Ayub been fairly established, before the vindictive spirit of the Khalif demanded his removal. Mohammed-Ibn-Yezid, Emir of Africa, was ordered to deprive of office all members of the tribe of Lakhm, to which Musa had belonged, and Al-Horr-Ibn-Abd-al-Rahman was invested with the precarious dignity of Viceroy of the Peninsula. Four hundred representatives of the proudest of the Arabian nobility, whom zeal for the faith, the love of adventure, or the hope of renown had attracted to the shores of Africa, accompanied him; warriors, many of whose descendants were destined to attain to distinction in every rank of civil and military life—even to the royal dignity itself—and to become the most prominent members of the Moslem aristocracy of Spain.

From the beginning, the arbitrary measures of the Emir carried distress and anxiety into every town and hamlet of the country. His rapacity knew no bounds. Under pretext of a deficiency in the collection of tribute, the officials charged with that duty were imprisoned and put to the torture. In the infliction of punishment no distinction of religious belief was recognized; Moslem and Christian alike felt the heavy hand of the tyrant; and even the oldest and most renowned officers of the army, veterans who had served in Syria and Africa, the companions of Tarik and Musa, were not exempt from the exactions of his insatiable avarice. So intolerable did these oppressions become, that the cause of Islam was seriously endangered; proselytism ceased; no official, however high in rank, was secure in the possession of liberty, property, and life; and the unfortunate Jews and Christians were exposed to all the evils of the most cruel persecution. As the Emir of Africa evinced a remarkable apathy when the removal of Al-Horr was demanded by the outraged people of Spain, application was made to the Khalif Omar in person, who at once deposed the offensive governor, and appointed as his successor Al-Samh, the general commanding the army of the northern frontier. This appointment did credit to the discernment of the Khalif, for it proved eminently wise and judicious. The first efforts of Al-Samh were directed to the correction of irregularities in the administration of the revenue. Formerly the large cities, where was naturally collected the most of the wealth of the kingdom and hence the bulk of property liable to taxation, had been required to contribute only one-tenth of their income towards the expenses of government, while the villages and the cultivated lands had been assessed at one-fifth. This inequality was due originally to a desire to favor the Jews, whose love of traffic had induced them to establish themselves in the principal towns, offering, as the latter did, better facilities for the encouragement of commerce and the rapid accumulation of property. In addition to this much-needed reform, the able viceroy collected the bands of Moors and Berbers,—whose nomadic habits and predatory instincts, inherited from a long line of ancestors, had resisted former attempts at colonization,—settled them upon unoccupied lands, and, by every possible inducement, tried to impress upon the minds of these savage warriors the importance and the superior advantages of civilization. He caused a census to be taken of all the inhabitants of the Peninsula, and with it sent to Damascus elaborate tables of statistics, in which were carefully described the various towns, the topography of the coast, the situation of the harbors, the wealth of the country, the nature of its products, the volume of its commerce, and the extent of its mineral and agricultural resources. The restoration of the magnificent bridge of Cordova, constructed in the reign of Augustus, is of itself an enduring monument to his fame. But the energies of Al-Samh were not expended solely in the monotonous but beneficial avocations of peace. As the friend and associate of Tarik he had seen service on many a stoutly contested field, and now, when his dominions were tranquil and prosperous, he received, with the exultation of an ardent believer, the order of the Khalif to carry the Holy War beyond the Pyrenees.

The province of Narbonnese Gaul, once a part of the Visigothic empire, and hitherto protected from the incursions of its dangerous neighbors by the lofty mountain rampart which formed its southern boundary, continued to cherish the traditions and to observe the customs of its ancient rulers. It embraced the greater portion of modern Languedoc, that smiling region which, watered by the Rhone, the Garonne, and their numerous tributaries, had, through the fertility of its soil and the advantages of its semi-tropical climate, early attracted the attention of the adventurous colonists of Greece and Italy. The high state of civilization to which this region attained, and its progress in the arts, are manifested by the architectural remains which still adorn its cities,—remains which, in elegance of design and imposing magnificence, are unequalled by even the far-famed ruins of the Eternal City. No structures in any country illustrate so thoroughly the taste and genius of classic times as the arch of Orange, the Pont du Gard, the temples and the amphitheatre of Nîmes, whose graceful proportions and wonderful state of preservation never fail to elicit the enthusiastic admiration of the traveller. The inhabitants also have retained, through the vicissitudes of centuries of warfare and foreign domination, the traits and features of their classic ancestry. In the vainglorious pride of the Provençal and his neighbor the Gascon are traceable the haughty demeanor of the Roman patrician; while the women of Arles, in their symmetry of form, their faultless profiles, and their statuesque grace, recall the beauties of the age of Pericles.

This territory was known to the Goths by the name of Septimania, from the seven principal cities, Narbonne, Nîmes, Agde, Lodève, Maguelonne, Béziers, and Carcassonne, included within its borders, and was still governed by the maxims of the Gothic polity which formerly prevailed in the Peninsula. Although divided into a number of little principalities, whose chieftains promiscuously indulged their propensities to rapine without fear of the intervention of any superior power, it had for years preserved the appearance of a disunited but independent state. In the North, the anarchy accompanying the bloody struggles of the princes of the Merovingian dynasty, which preceded the foundation of the empire of Pepin and Charlemagne, removed, for the time, all danger of encroachment from that quarter. But the Gothic nobles, since the battle of the Guadalete, had cast glances of anxiety and dismay upon the distant summits of the Pyrenees. Innumerable refugees from Spain had sought safety among their Gallic kinsmen, and the tales which they related of the excesses of the invaders lost nothing in their recital by these terror-stricken fugitives. Too feeble of themselves to entertain hopes of successful resistance, the Goths suspended for a time their hereditary quarrels, and, to avoid the impending ruin, acknowledged the sovereignty of Eudes, the powerful Duke of Aquitaine.

Al-Samh, having completed his preparations, emerged from the mountain passes at the head of a formidable army. After a siege of a month, Narbonne, the capital of Septimania, surrendered to the Moslems, who obtained from the churches and convents an immense booty, most of which had been deposited by fugitive Spanish prelates in those sanctuaries as places of inviolable security. Almost without a blow, the fortresses of Béziers, Maguelonne, and Carcassonne accepted the liberal conditions of Mohammedan vassalage. The flying squadrons of Arab cavalry now spread ruin and alarm over the beautiful valley of the Garonne. So attractive was the country and so lax the discipline, that it was with some difficulty the Emir succeeded in collecting the scattering detachments of his army, which had wandered far in search of plunder; and, resuming his march, he at length invested the important city of Toulouse, the capital of Aquitaine. The siege was pushed with vigor, and the inhabitants, reduced to extremity, were already meditating a surrender, when the Duke approached with a force greatly superior to that of the

Moslems. The latter, disheartened at the sight of such an overwhelming multitude, were disposed to retreat, when the Emir, actuated by a spirit worthy of the ancient heroes of Islam, roused their flagging courage by an eloquent harangue, in which he artfully suggested both the prizes of victory and the promises of the Faith. As the two hosts ranged themselves in martial array, the priests distributed among the Franks small pieces of sponge which had received the blessing of the Pope; amulets more serviceable, it appeared, than the thickest armor, for we are assured by the veracious chroniclers of the age that not a Christian soldier who carried one of these valuable relics lost his life in the battle. The contest was long and obstinate; the Moslems performed prodigies of valor; but they had lost the religious fervor which had so often rendered their arms invincible; and anxiety for the safety of their spoils had greater influence upon them than the security of their conquest or the propagation of their religion. The issue long remained doubtful; but the Emir having exposed himself too rashly fell pierced by a lance; and his army, completely routed, retired from the field with the loss of two-thirds of its number. Abd-al-Rahman-al-Ghafeki, an officer of high rank and distinguished reputation, was invested with the temporary command by his associates, and conducted the shattered remnant of the Moslems to Narbonne. Intent on plundering the treasures of the enemy's camp, which contained the bulk of the portable wealth of Septimania, the Franks could not be induced to reap the full advantages of victory. The retreat was conducted with consummate skill, for the peasantry, aroused by the news of the disaster, swarmed in vast numbers around the retreating Moslems, who were often compelled to cut their way through the dense and ever increasing masses, which immediately closed in and harassed their rear.

This was the first serious reverse which had befallen the hitherto invincible arms of Islam. The tide had begun to turn, and the implacable enmity cultivated for centuries between the two contending nations of Arabia—which neither the precepts of a congenial form of faith, nor military fame, nor uninterrupted conquest, nor the possession of fabulous wealth, nor the enjoyment of the fairest portions of the globe could eradicate—was now to exhibit to the world the splendid weakness of the Successors of Mohammed. A glance at the origin and progress of this barbarian feud, which survived the impetuous ardor of proselytism, and had nourished for ages its hereditary vindictiveness, and, arising in distant Asia, was destined to be revived with undiminished violence upon the plains of Aragon and Andalusia, is essential to a proper understanding of the causes to which are to be attributed the downfall of the Moslem Empire of the West.

As already mentioned, irreconcilable hostility had existed from time immemorial between the inhabitants of Northern and Southern Arabia. Due to a difference of origin, and probably based upon invasion and conquest in a prehistoric age, this race-prejudice had been aggravated by a feeling of mutual hatred and contempt, derived from the different avocations of the people of Yemen and those of the Hedjaz, the peaceful merchants and the lawless rovers of the Desert. The Maadites, to whom the Meccans belonged, were shepherds and brigands. They prided themselves upon being the aristocracy of Arabia; and the thrifty and industrious dwellers of the South, the Kahtanites, who saw nothing degrading in the tillage of their fields, in the care of their valuable date plantations, and in the profits of commerce, could, in the consciousness of superior wealth and culture, readily endure the scorn of their neighbors, whose gains were obtained by overreaching their guests, by extortions from pilgrims to the Kaaba, and by sharing in the plunder of caravans. The Medinese, whose origin was partly Jewish, whose pursuits were sedentary, and whose affiliations connected them with the trading communities of Yemen, were classed with the Kahtanites by the children of Maad. From this mutual antagonism the religion of Mohammed received its greatest impulse and the power which enabled it to overturn all its adversaries; and from it, also, are to be traced the misfortunes which befell the empire of Islam even before it was firmly established; which made every country and province in its wide dominions the scene of civil strife and bloodshed; which profaned with insult and violence the shrines of the most holy temples; which annihilated whole dynasties by the hand of the assassin; and which, far more potent than the iron hand of Charles Martel and the valor of the Franks, lost by a single stroke the sceptre of Europe. Hence arose the disputes which terminated in the murder of Othman and its terrible retribution, the sack of the Holy Cities; the intrigues and controversies which resulted from the election of Ali; the death of Hosein; the insurrections of the fanatical reformers of Persia; the proscription of the Ommeyades; the perpetual disorders which distracted the Emirate of Africa. In Spain also, whither had resorted so many of the fugitives of Medina and their Syrian conquerors, the smouldering embers of national prejudice and religious discord were rekindled. The most sacred ties of nationality, of religion, or of kindred were powerless to counteract this deep-rooted antipathy, which seems inherent in the two divisions of the Arab race. The most noble incentives to patriotism, the pride of victory, the alluring prospects of commercial greatness, of literary distinction, of boundless dominion, were ignored in the hope of humiliating a rival faction and of gratifying a ruthless spirit of revenge. At different times—such is the strange inconsistency of human nature—the Maadites became voluntary dependents of the kings of Yemen and Hira. In an age of remote antiquity, the Himyarite dialect spoken in the South had been supplanted by the more polished idiom of the Hedjaz.

The intensity and duration of the hatred existing between Maadite and Yemenite are inconceivable by the mind of one of Caucasian blood, and are without precedent, even in the East. It affected the policy of nations; it determined the fate of empires; it menaced the stability of long-established articles of faith; it invaded the family, corrupting the instincts of filial reverence, and betraying the sacred confidences of domestic life. Upon pretexts so frivolous as hardly to justify a quarrel between individuals. nations were plunged into all the calamities of civil war. A difference affecting the construction of a point of religious discipline was sufficient to assemble a horde of fanatics, and devote whole provinces to devastation and massacre. A petty act of trespass—the detaching of a vine-leaf, the theft of a melon—provoked the most cruel retaliation upon the community to which the culprit belonged. The Maadite, inheriting the haughty spirit of the Bedouin marauder, despised his ancestors if there was in their veins a single drop of the blood of Kahtan; and, on the other hand, under corresponding conditions of relationship, the Yemenite refused to pray even for his mother if she was allied to the Maadites, whom he stigmatized as a race of barbarians and slaves. And yet these were divisions of the same people; with similar tastes and manners; identical in dress and personal aspect; speaking the same tongue; worshipping at the same altars; fighting under the same banners; frequently united by intermarriage; actuated by the same ambitions; zealous for the attainment of the same ends. The investigation of this anomaly, an ethnical peculiarity so remarkable in its tenacity of prejudice, and which, enduring for more than twenty-five hundred years, the most powerful motives and aspirations of the mind have failed to abrogate, presents one of the most interesting problems in the history of humanity.

In the train of Musa had followed hundreds of the former inhabitants of Medina, who carried with them bitter memories of ruined homes and slaughtered kinsmen. The impression made by these enthusiastic devotees—defenders of the sepulchre of the Prophet, and eloquent with the traditions of the Holy City—upon the savage tribes of Africa was far more deep and permanent than that of the homilies of Musa delivered under the shadow of the scimetar. Their bearing was more affable, their treatment of the conquered more lenient, their popularity far more decided, than that of the haughty descendants of the Koreish. With the memory of inexpiable wrong was cherished an implacable spirit of vengeance. The name of Syrian, associated with infidelity, sacrilege, lust, and massacre, was odious to the pious believer of the Hedjaz. His soul revolted at the tales of ungodly revels which disgraced the polished and voluptuous court of Damascus. The riotous banquets, the lascivious dances, the silken vestments, the midnight orgies, and above all the blasphemous jests of satirical poets, struck with horror the abstemious and scrupulous precisians of Medina and Aden. The Ommeyade noble was looked upon by them as worse than an apostate; a being whose status was inferior to that of either Pagan, Jew, or Christian. The feelings of the descendants of the proud aristocracy of Mecca towards their adversaries were scarcely less bitter. They remembered with contempt the obscure origin and plebeian avocations of the first adherents of the Prophet. Their minds were inflamed with rage when they recalled the murder of the inoffensive Othman, whose blood-stained garments, mute but potent witnesses of his sufferings, had hung for many months in the Great Mosque of Damascus. With indignation was repeated the story of the cowardly attempt against the life of Muavia, and of the poisoned thrust which brought him to an untimely end. With but few exceptions, the Emirs of Spain were stanch adherents of the line of the Ommeyades, and never failed to discriminate against the obnoxious Medinese and their posterity. The latter retaliated by secret treachery; by open rebellion; by defeating vast schemes of policy before they were matured; by encouraging the dangerous encroachments of the Asturian mountaineers. This sectional strife early disclosed itself in the face of the enemy by fomenting the quarrel between Tarik and Musa. It thwarted the plans of the great Arab general, whose enterprising genius and towering ambition aimed at the subjugation and conversion of Europe. It armed the hands which struck down in the sanctuary the wise and capable Abd-al-Aziz. It retarded the progress of Abd-al-Rahman, filled his camp with brawls and confusion, increased the insubordination of his troops, and gave time for the recall of the barbarian hosts of Charles Martel from the confines of Gaul and Germany. In the Arabian population the Yemenite faction largely preponderated, especially in Eastern and Western Spain, which were almost exclusively settled by its adherents. In consequence of their numerical superiority and political importance, they claimed, certainly with some appearance of justice, the right to be governed by an emir whose views and sympathies were in accordance with their own. The court of Damascus, thoroughly cognizant of the uncertain hold it maintained upon a distant and wealthy province, inhabited by a turbulent rabble whose animosity towards the family of the Ommeyades was thinly disguised by lukewarm professions of loyalty and occasional remittances of tribute, had the sagacity to humor its prejudices, and to appoint to the Spanish Emirate governors of the dominant party. In the course of forty years, but three of the rulers of Spain out of twenty traced their origin to the detested posterity of Maad. This politic course preserved in its allegiance the wealthy provinces of the Peninsula, until the influence of the Yemenites and the Berbers was hopelessly weakened by the civil wars preceding the foundation of the Western Khalifate. The effects of the latter, by the serious disturbances they promoted and the consequent injury inflicted upon the integrity of the Mohammedan empire, had awakened the hopes and revived the faltering courage of the terrified nations of Christendom.

There is perhaps no recorded instance of a feud so obscure in its origin, so anomalous in its conditions, so momentous in its consequences, as this rancorous antagonism of the two divisions of the Arabian people. It illustrates more clearly than an entire commentary could do, the inflexibility of purpose, a trait conspicuous in the Bedouin, which could sacrifice all the advantages and pleasures of life, all the hopes of eternity, to the destruction of an hereditary foe. For centuries, in an isolated and arid country of Asia, certain hordes of barbarians, ignorant of the arts, careless of luxury, proud, intrepid, and independent, had pursued each other with unrelenting hostility. With the advent of a Prophet bringing a new revelation, the most potent influences which can affect humanity are brought to bear upon the nation. A whole people emigrates; is in time united with many conquered races; appreciates and accepts the pricless benefits of civilization; becomes pre-eminent in science, in letters, in all the arts of war and government, in all the happy and beneficent pursuits of peace. But amidst this prosperity and grandeur the hereditary feuds of the Desert remained unreconciled. Neither the denunciations of the Koran nor the fear of future punishment were able to more than temporarily arrest this fatal enmity. Islam was in a few generations filled with dangerous schismatics, whose tribal prejudice was, more than devotion to any dogma, the secret of their menacing attitude towards the khalifate. The mockery and sacrilege of the princes of Damascus, scions of the ancient persecutors of Mohammed, were caused by equally base, selfish, and unpatriotic motives. And the people of Medina, without whose timely aid—induced, it is not to be forgotten, by this perpetual feud between Kahtanite and Maadite—Islam could never have survived, were doomed henceforth to a career of uninterrupted misfortune. Their city, which had sheltered the Prophet in his adversity, and had received his blessing, was sacked and laid waste; and in the sacred mosque which covered his remains were stabled the horses of the Syrian cavalry. The unhappy exiles, pursued in every land by the impositions and cruelty of the tyrants of Syria, were, despite their frequent efforts to throw off the yoke, finally cowed into submission. In the long series of rulers, from Sad-Ibn-Obada, surnamed The Perfect, the champion of Medina, whose election as the first of the Khalifs the overbearing insolence of the Koreish was scarcely able to prevent, to the effeminate Boabdil, his lineal descendant, the conduct of the Defenders of the Prophet is marked by errors of judgment, by want of tact, by defiance of law, and by ill-timed enterprises prolific of disaster. No city, however, has placed a deeper impress upon the history of nations and the cause of civilization, since the immortal age of Athens, than Medina. Its influence, although often of a negative character, while it was the support of Islam in its period of weakness, was a serious impediment in its day of power. The benefits it conferred upon a handful of struggling proselytes were more than counterbalanced by the discord it promoted in the camps and councils of Irac, Syria, Africa, and Spain.

The census taken by Al-Samh had disclosed the vast preponderance of Christians who still adhered to their ancient faith, and the fears of the Khalif Yezid were aroused by the presence of so many hostile sectaries in the heart of his empire. To obviate this evil, and to assure the future permanence of Moslem supremacy, he devised a scheme which indicates a degree of worldly wisdom and political acuteness rare in the councils of that age. He proposed that the Christian population of Spain and Septimania be deported and settled in the provinces of Africa and Syria, and the territory thus vacated be colonized with faithful Mussulmans. Thus Spain would have become thoroughly Mohammedan, and the establishment of armed garrisons in Gaul would have been supplemented by the aid of a brave and active peasantry, affording an invaluable initial point for the extension of the Moslem arms in the north and east of Europe. But this was by no means the greatest advantage of this bold and original stroke of statesmanship. The penetrating eye of Yezid had already discerned the dangerous character of the mountaineers of the Asturias, who had preserved the traditions and inherited the valor of the founders of the Gothic monarchy. The removal of this threatening element was equivalent to its extirpation, and would probably have preserved for an indefinite period the Moslem empire of Spain in its original integrity. The province of Septimania, supported by the powerful armies of a united and homogeneous nation, could then have defied the desultory assaults of the Franks. The exiles, scattered in distant lands, must by force, or through inducements of material advantage, have gradually become amalgamated with their masters; their children would have professed the prevailing faith; and the progenitors of that dynasty whose policy controlled the destinies of Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would have disappeared from the knowledge of man. The severity of this project, dictated partly by religious zeal, but principally by political acumen, would have been excessive, yet its beneficial effects upon the fortunes of Islam must have been incalculable. But the mind of Al-Samh, incapable of appreciating the paramount importance of the enterprise, despising the Goths of the sierras as savages, and, like the majority of his countrymen, underestimating their resolution and capacity for warfare, induced him to discourage the plan of the Khalif, by representing that it was unnecessary, on account of the daily increasing numbers of converts to the doctrines of the Koran. The successful inauguration of a similar policy by Cromwell in Ireland nine hundred years afterwards, whose completion, fortunately for the rebellious natives, was defeated by his death, demonstrates the extraordinary sagacity of the sovereign of Damascus in devising a measure of statecraft whose execution portended such important consequences to modern society, and which has, for the most part, escaped the notice of the historians of the Moorish empire. Before departing upon his unfortunate expedition, Al-Samh had left Anbasah-Ibn-Sohim, one of his most trusty lieutenants, in charge of the affairs of the Peninsula. The latter, learning of the rout of Toulouse, without delay sent a large body of troops to the North to cover the retreat of the defeated army; a precaution rendered unnecessary by the generalship of Abd-al-Rahman, who was now recognized as emir, the choice of his comrades being soon afterwards confirmed by the Viceroy of Africa. The Christians of Gothic Gaul and the Asturias, greatly elated by the disaster which had befallen their enemies, soon manifested greater hostility than ever, and it required all the firmness and prudence of Abd-al-Rahman to restrain them. The insurrection which began to threaten the power of the Moslems in the trans-Pyrenean province was, however, crushed before it became formidable; the mountaineers were driven back into their strongholds; the suspended tribute was collected, and an increased contribution was levied upon such communities as had distinguished themselves by an obstinate resistance.

Although the idol of his soldiers, Abd-al-Rahman was not a favorite with the great officials of the government. They admired his prowess, and were not disposed to depreciate his talents, but they hated him on account of his popularity, for which he was mainly indebted to his lavish donations to the troops. It was his custom, as soon as the royal fifth had been set apart, to abandon the remainder of the spoil to the army, a course so unusual as to provoke the remonstrances of his friends, while it elicited the applause and secured the undying attachment of the soldiery. Application was made by the malcontents to the Viceroy of Africa, Baschar-Ibn-Hantala, for the removal of Abd-al-Rahman, under the pretext that the Moslem cause was becoming endangered through the prevalence of luxury introduced by his unprecedented munificence. The charges were pressed with such vigor that they prevailed, and Anbasah-Ibn-Sohim was raised to the emirate. Abd-al-Rahman—such was the confidence of his opponents in his integrity and patriotism—was reinstated in the government of Eastern Spain, which he had held previous to the battle of Toulouse. With the submission and piety of a faithful Moslem, he congratulated his successor, swore fealty to him, and retired without a murmur to reassume a subordinate position in a kingdom which he had ruled with absolute power. Anbasah soon displayed by active and salutary measures his fitness for his high office. The administration had become to some extent demoralized by the easy temper and prodigal liberality of Abd-al-Rahman, and Anbasah's first care was to remodel the fiscal department and adopt a new and more exact apportionment of taxation. Carefully avoiding any appearance of injustice to the tributary Christians, he divided among the immigrants—who now, in larger numbers than ever before, poured into Spain from Africa and the East—the lands which were unoccupied, and had hitherto served as pastures to the nomadic Berbers, whose traditions and habits discouraged the selection of any permanent habitation. While inflexibly just to the loyal and obedient, Anbasah punished all attempts at insurrection with a rigor akin to ferocity. Some districts in the province of Tarragona having revolted on account of real or fancied grievances, the Emir razed their fortifications, crucified the leaders, and imposed upon the inhabitants a double tax, both as a punishment and a warning. In order to keep alive the respect for the Moslem name, he sent frequent expeditions into Gaul, whose operations, conducted upon a limited scale, were mainly confined to the destruction of property and the seizure of captives.

The Jewish population of the Peninsula, relieved from the vexatious laws of the Goths and greatly increased in wealth and numbers by foreign accessions, had already risen to exalted rank in the social and political scale under the favorable auspices of Mohammedan rule. It enjoyed the highest consideration with the Arabs, whose success had been so largely due to its friendly co-operation. This community, endowed with the hereditary thrift of the race, rich beyond all former experience, still ardently devoted to a religion endeared by centuries of persecution, and by the deeply grounded hope of future spiritual and temporal sovereignty, was now startled by the report that the Messiah, whose advent they had so long and so patiently awaited, had appeared in the East. The highly imaginative temperament of the Oriental, and the phenomenal success of the founders of religious systems in that quarter of the world, had been productive of the rise of many designing fanatics, all claiming the gifts of prophecy and miracle, and all secure of a numerous following in an age fertile in impostors. In this instance, the Hebrew prophet, whose name was Zonaria, had established his abode in Syria; and thither in multitudes the Spanish Jews, abandoning their homes and carrying only their valuables, journeyed, without questioning the genuineness of their information or reflecting upon the results of their blind credulity. No sooner were the pilgrims across the strait, than the crafty Emir, declaring their estates forfeited by abandonment, confiscated the latter, which included some of the finest mansions and most productive lands in the Peninsula. This fanatical contagion extended even into Gaul, and the Jewish colonists of that region hastened to join their Spanish brethren in their pilgrimage of folly, only to realize, when too late, that they had lost their worldly possessions without the compensating advantage of a celestial inheritance.

Having regulated the civil affairs of his government to his satisfaction, the eyes of Anbasah now turned towards the North, where lay the tempting prize of France, coveted by every emir since the time of Musa. The prestige of the Arabs had been materially impaired by the serious reverse they had sustained before Toulouse. The first encounter with the fiery warriors of the South whom fear had pictured as incarnate demons, and whose prowess was said to be invincible, had divested the foes of Christianity of many of the terrors which exaggerated rumor had imparted to them. Of the numerous fortified places in Septimania which had once seemed to be pledges of a permanent Mohammedan settlement, the city of Narbonne alone remained. Its massive walls had easily resisted the ill-directed efforts of a barbarian enemy, unprovided with military engines, and unaccustomed to the protracted and monotonous service implied by a siege, while its vicinity to the sea rendered a reduction by blockade impracticable. Thus, protected by the natural advantages of its location and by the courage of its garrison, Narbonne presented the anomaly of an isolated stronghold in the midst of the enemy's country. Traversing the mountainous passes without difficulty the Emir took Carcassonne, a city which had hitherto enjoyed immunity from capture; and by this bold stroke so intimidated the inhabitants, that the whole of Septimania at once, and without further resistance, returned to its allegiance to the Khalif. No retribution was exacted for past disloyalty, as Anbasah was too politic not to appreciate the value of clemency in a province held by such a precarious tenure; the people were left as before to the untrammelled exercise of their worship; but the unpaid tribute was rigorously collected, and a large number of hostages, chosen from the noblest families of the Goths, were sent to Spain.

The Moslem army, proceeding along the coast as far as the Rhone, turned towards the interior, and ascended the valley of the river, ravaging its settlements with fire and sword. Advancing to Lyons, it took that city, and thence directing its course into Burgundy, it stormed and pillaged the town of Autun. Hitherto the invaders had encountered no organized opposition, but a hastily collected militia now began to harass their march, encumbered as they were with a prodigious booty; and, in a skirmish in which the peasantry displayed an unusual amount of daring, Anbasah, having rashly exposed himself, was mortally wounded. The dying Emir bequeathed his authority to Odrah-Ibn-Abdallah, an appointment distasteful to the members of the Divan; and, in accordance with their demands, the Viceroy of Africa designated Yahya-Ibn-Salmah as the successor of Anbasah. The austere and inflexible spirit of this commander, his keen sense of justice, and his determination to enforce the strictest discipline among the soldiery, made him everywhere unpopular. The pliant Viceroy of Africa was once more appealed to, and such was his subserviency to the clamors of the discontented chieftains that not only was Yahya-Ibn-Salmah removed, but within a few months his two successors, Othman-Ibn-Abu-Nesa and Hodheyfa-Ibn-al-Ahwass, were appointed and deposed. Finally the Khalif himself sent to Al-Haytham-Ibn-Obeyd the royal commission as his representative. This official was a Syrian by birth, and inherited all the bitter prejudices of his faction which had been fostered by the pride and insolence of the triumphant Ommeyades. Merciless by nature, fierce and rapacious, Al-Haytham spared neither Moslem nor Christian. Especially was his animosity directed towards the descendants of the Companions of Mohammed, and their proselytes and adherents, the Berbers. The complaints now lodged with the Viceroy of Africa were unheeded, as the offensive governor had received his appointment directly from the hands of the Commander of the Faithful. In their extremity, the victims of Al-Haytham preferred charges before the Divan of Damascus; and the Khalif Hischem, convinced that the Emir was exceeding his authority, appointed one of the most distinguished personages of his court, Mohammed-Ibn-Abdallah, as special envoy to investigate the administration of Al-Haytham, and to depose and punish him if, in his judgment, the well-being of Islam and the interests of good government demanded it. Arriving incognito at Cordova, the plenipotentiary of the Khalif, without difficulty or delay, obtained the necessary evidence of the guilt of the unworthy official. Then, exhibiting his commission, he publicly stripped the latter of the insignia of his rank, and, having shaved his head, had him paraded through the city upon an ass, amidst the jeers and insults of the people he had robbed and persecuted. All his property was confiscated, and Mohammed made amends as far as possible by bestowing upon the surviving victims of the disgraced Emir the immense treasures he had amassed during a reign of indiscriminate extortion. Then placing Al-Haytham in irons he sent him under guard to Africa. Two months sufficed to redress the grievances which had threatened a revolution—to recompense the plundered, to liberate the imprisoned, to console the tortured, to expel from their places the cruel subordinates of the oppressor; and, having elicited the approbation and received the blessings of all classes, including the hereditary enemies of his tribe, Mohammed departed for Syria, after conferring the viceregal authority upon the renowned captain Abd-al-Rahman, who thus a second time ascended the throne of the Emirate of the West.

Of noble birth and distinguished reputation, Abd-al-Rahman united to the eminent qualities of a successful ruler and general all the insufferable arrogance of the Arab race. Connected by ties of the closest friendship with one of the sons of the Khalif, Omar-al-Khattah, he had received from him many particulars regarding the life and habits of Mohammed, and this intimacy contributed to increase the feeling of superiority, not unmingled with contempt, with which he regarded the horde of barbarian proselytes attracted to his banner rather by thirst for plunder than from religious zeal. His generosity endeared him to the soldiery, but his inflexible sense of right alienated the powerful officials of the Divan enriched by years of unmolested peculation. The knowledge of his Syrian origin, constantly evinced by a marked partiality for his countrymen, at once aroused the secret hostility of the crowd of turbulent adventurers who, collected from every district of Africa and Asia, composed his subjects, and who, destitute of loyalty, religion, principle, or gratitude, regarded an Arab as their natural enemy, an heterogeneous assemblage wherein the Berber element, dominated by the rankling prejudices of the Yemenites, their spiritual guides, greatly preponderated.

Visiting, in turn, the different provinces subject to his rule, Abd-al-Rahman confirmed the good dispositions of his predecessor, the plenipotentiary Mohammed-Ibn-Abdallah, and corrected such abuses as had escaped the attention of the latter. In some instances, the injustice of the walis had wantonly deprived the Christians of their houses of worship, in defiance of the agreement permitting them to celebrate their rites without molestation; in others, their rapacity had connived at the erection of new churches, prohibited by the provisions of former treaties, and in absolute contravention of Mohammedan law. This evil of late years had become so general that scarcely a community in the Peninsula was exempt from it. Through the care and firmness of the Emir the confiscated churches were restored to their congregations; the new edifices were razed to the ground; the bribes which had purchased the indulgence of the walis were surrendered to the public treasury; and the corrupt officials paid the penalty of their malfeasance with scourging and imprisonment.

His reforms completed, and secure in the apparent submission and attachment of his subjects, Abd-al-Rahman now turned his attention to the prosecution of a design which, in spite of fearful reverses in the past and of unknown dangers impending in the future, had long been the cherished object of his ambition—the conquest of France. As the representative of the Khalif, and consequently vested with both spiritual and temporal power, he had caused to be proclaimed from the pulpit of every mosque visited by him in his progress, the obligation of all faithful Moslems to avenge the deaths of the martyrs fallen in former invasions, and to add to the empire of Islam the rich and productive territory of Europe.

Fully aware of the vast difficulties which would necessarily attend such an undertaking, and enlightened by his former experience, Abd-al-Rahman resolved to provide, as far as possible, against any contingency that might arise from too hasty preparation, or an inferiority in numbers, sent messengers to almost every country acknowledging the authority of the Khalif, to proclaim the Djihad, or Holy War, and to solicit the pecuniary aid of all devout and liberal believers. The call was promptly answered. The riches of the East and West poured in a constant stream into the treasury of Cordova. Wealthy merchants sent their gold; female devotees their jewels; even the beggar was anxious to contribute his pittance for the advancement of the Faith and the confusion of the infidel. From neighboring lands, and from the remotest confines of the Mohammedan world alike, from Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, Al-Maghreb, and Persia, military adventurers, soldiers of fortune, desperate fanatics, half-naked savages from Mauritania, the proud and ferocious tribesmen of the Desert, astonished the inhabitants of the cities of Andalusia with their multitudes, their tumultuous and unintelligible cries, and their fierce enthusiasm. The entire force of the Hispano-Arab army, disciplined by many a scene of foreign and internecine conflict, was marshalled for the coming crusade, which, unlike those expeditions which had preceded it, aimed not merely at the spoliation of cities and the enslavement of their inhabitants, but at the permanent occupation and settlement of the country from the Pyrenees to the frontier of Germany, from the Rhætian Alps to the ocean.

The several walis had been ordered to assemble with their forces at a designated rendezvous on the northern border of the Peninsula. This district, which included the mountain passes and the fortresses defending them, was then under the command of Othman-Ibn-Abu-Nesa, a native of Africa, who had, for a few months, enjoyed and abused the power of the emirate, and whom the generous policy of Abd-al-Rahman had retained in this important post, bestowed upon the African chieftain after his deposition. A man of violent passions and without principle, Othman was, however, not deficient in those talents which confer distinction upon soldiers of fortune. Of obscure birth and low associations, he had, by sheer force of character and daring, won the confidence of the Viceroy of Africa, who had conferred upon him the government of Spain; a position from which he was barred by the unwritten law of the Conquest, which discouraged the aspirations of individuals of his nationality. Deeply chagrined that he had not been reinstated in the office whose delights he had scarcely tasted, and devoured by envy, whose bitterness was increased by the antipathies of a party of which he was the acknowledged head, Othman determined to revenge his fancied wrongs, and to secure for himself the advantages of independent sovereignty. His influence extended even to the Ebro, to the north and east of which stream the Berbers, who were devoted to him, had established themselves in great numbers. At that time the condition of the redoubtable Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine, had become desperate. He had long waged a doubtful war with the Franks, whose superior strength rendered his ultimate subjection certain. Upon the south, he was menaced by the encroachments of the marauding Arabs, whose expeditions kept his dominions in perpetual turmoil. Thus placed between two fires, he readily hearkened to the overtures of Othman, who proposed an alliance to be cemented by the marriage of the wali with the daughter of the Gothic noble. A treaty was made and ratified; the damsel—who was not compelled to renounce her faith—was delivered to her father's new ally; and the latter returned to his government, resolving to baffle by diplomacy the design of his master, and, if that were found impossible, confident that the strength of his mountain defences was sufficient to defy all the power of the emirate. To the orders of Abd-al-Rahman to attend him with his troops he returned evasive replies, pleading the engagement he had entered into, and his obligation to observe it. His repeated commands being ignored, and the patience of the army to advance growing uncontrollable, Abd-al-Rahman secretly despatched a squadron of light horsemen, under Gedhi-Ibn-Zeyan, a Syrian officer, with directions to bring in the refractory wali dead or alive. Pressing forward with the utmost diligence, the troopers came suddenly upon Othman, at Castrum

Liviæ, before he was even aware of the intentions of the Emir. He had barely time to take refuge with a few attendants and his bride in the neighboring mountains, before his enemies entered the town and, without halting, spurred on through the rugged defiles in hot pursuit. Overtaken near a brook where the party had stopped from fatigue, the rebel escort was killed or put to flight; the Gothic princess was taken; and Othman paid the forfeit of his treason with his life. The enterprising Gedhi cast at the feet of Abd-al-Rahman the head of the traitor as the proof of his success; and the captive, whose wondrous beauty charmed the eyes of all who saw her, was sent to grace the royal harem at Damascus.

And now, the gateways of the Pyrenees being open, the mighty host of Moslems poured through, like an inundation, upon the sunny fields of France. No reliable basis is available by which we can even approach to an accurate estimate of its numbers. Considering the publicity given to the crusade, the different sources whence the foreign recruits were drawn, the regular army of the Emir, and the bodies of cavalry furnished by the Viceroys of Africa and Egypt, it would seem that the invading army must have amounted to at least a hundred thousand men. Assembled without order, and wholly intolerant of discipline, the mutual jealousy and haughty independence of its unruly elements greatly impaired its efficiency. The members of each tribe mustered around their chieftain, who enjoyed but a precarious authority; while the obedience which all professed to the representative of the majesty of the Khalif was observed only so long as his commands did not clash with their wishes or run counter to the indulgence of their passions and inherited prejudices.

Meanwhile, the rumor of the approaching peril, exaggerated by distance, had spread consternation through every Christian community. It recalled the disastrous times of barbarian conquest, when the ferocious hordes of Goths and Huns swept with ruin and death the fairest provinces of the Roman Empire. Throughout the Orient, in the lands which acknowledged the supremacy of the Successor of Mohammed, the pious Moslem awaited, with confidence not unmingled with a feeling of exultation, tidings of the anticipated triumph of his brethren. The eyes of the entire world were turned in expectancy to the spot where must speedily be tested the respective prowess of the North and South; to the struggle which would forever determine the future of Europe, and decide without appeal the fate of Christianity. Onward, resistlessly, pitilessly, rolled the devastating flood of invasion. The Duke of Aquitaine had bravely met his enemies on the very slopes of the mountain barrier, but all his efforts were powerless to stay their progress. Cities were reduced to ashes and their inhabitants driven into slavery. The pastures were swept clean of their flocks; the blooming hill-sides and fertile valleys of the Garonne were transformed into scenes of desolation. Bordeaux, the populous and wealthy emporium of Aquitaine, paid for a short and ineffectual resistance with the plunder of its treasures, the massacre of its citizens, and its total destruction by fire. The Moorish army, encumbered with thousands of captives and the booty of an entire province, crossed the Garonne with difficulty, and resumed its slow and straggling march towards the interior. Upon the banks of the Dordogne Eudes had marshalled his followers to contest its passage. A fierce battle ensued; the Christians, overwhelmed by numbers, were surrounded and cut to pieces; and the carnage was so horrible as to excite the pity of the rude historians of an age prolific in violence and bloodshed. The conquest of Aquitaine achieved, the Emir moved on to Poitiers, and after ravaging the suburbs of that city, where stood the famous Church of St. Hilary, which was utterly destroyed, planted the white standard of the Ommeyades before its walls. That country, whose hostile factions were subsequently reconciled and consolidated by the genius of Charlemagne, and which is known to us as France, was, during the seventh century, in a state of frightful anarchy. In the South, the important province of Septimania had formerly acknowledged the supremacy of the Visigoths, and after the overthrow of their empire had enjoyed a nominal independence. Aquitaine was subject to its dukes, who maintained an unequal contest with the growing powers of the North and the insatiable ambition of the Saracens. Towards the East, the petty lord of Austrasia was involved in perpetual intrigues and hostilities with his turbulent neighbors, the princes of Neustria and Burgundy. In the year 638, with the death of the renowned Dagobert, whose dominions extended to the Danube, disappeared the last vestige of independence and authority possessed by the monarchs of the Merovingian dynasty. Henceforth the regal power was vested in, and practically exercised by, the bold and able mayors of the palace, the prime ministers of the *rois fainéants,* who, through indifference or compulsion, were apparently contented with the titles and glittering baubles of royalty. The superior talents of the priest were industriously employed in enriching his church or his abbey, and the zeal and fears of the devout co-operating with the avarice of the clergy, the sacred edifices became depositories of treasures which dazzled the eyes of the greedy freebooters of Abd-al-Rahman with their magnificence and value. No sovereign in Europe could boast of such wealth as had been accumulated through the lavish generosity of pilgrims and penitents by the shrines of St. Hilary of Poitiers and St. Martin of Tours.

The ecclesiastics habitually represented themselves as the treasurers of heaven, the chosen intermediaries with the saints; and the most costly gift was scarcely considered an equivalent for a hasty blessing or a relic of more than doubtful authenticity, graciously bestowed upon the humble and delighted contributor to clerical rapacity and monkish imposture.

The manly vigor inherited from a barbarian ancestry, developed and strengthened by military exercises, had formed of the Franks a nation of heroes. Their gigantic forms, encased in mail, enabled them to resist assaults which must have overwhelmed mortals of less ponderous build. A phlegmatic temperament, joined to a devotion to their lords which never questioned the justice of their commands, imparted to them steadiness and inflexible constancy in the field. Their naturally ferocious aspect was increased by grotesque helmets of towering height, and by the skins of wild beasts which draped their massive shoulders, while their weapons were of a size and weight that the demigods of old alone might wield. Such were the warriors to whose valor were now committed the destinies of the Christian world. The throne of the Franks was then occupied by Thierry IV., one of a series of royal phantoms, who had been exalted to this nominal dignity by a certain mayor of the palace named Charles, the natural son of Pepin d'Heristal, Duke of Austrasia. It was the policy of these officials, necessarily men of talent, whose abilities had raised them to prominence, and who controlled the empire of the state, to bestow the crown upon princely youths purposely familiarized with vice, that every noble aspiration might be stifled and every patriotic impulse repressed in the indulgence of the most wanton and effeminate luxury. The profligate habits of these sovereigns, which shortened their reigns, account for their number and rapid succession in the annals of France.

The chroniclers of the eighth and ninth centuries, garrulous upon the martyrdom of saints and the performance of miracles, have scarcely mentioned the achievements of the most remarkable personage of his time. Their well-known enmity to his name, associated with the appropriation of church property, although employed for the preservation of Christendom, has had, no doubt, much to do with this contemptuous silence. Pepin, using the privilege sanctioned by the depraved manners of the age, lived in concubinage with Alpäide, the mother of Charles, whose social position was yet so little inferior to that of a matrimonial alliance that she is often spoken of as a second wife. An austere prelate, Lambert by name, who occupied the See of Maestricht, with a boldness and zeal unusual in the complaisant churchmen of the eighth century, saw fit to publicly rebuke Pepin for this unlawful connection, and, with studied insult, rejected the hospitality which the kindness of the Mayor of the Palace had tendered him. Offended by this exhibition of ill-breeding and independence, the brother of the lady procured the murder of the bishop, who was forthwith canonized, and is still prominent among the most efficient intercessors of the Roman Catholic calendar. The murderers, careless alike of the anathemas of the Church and of the process of the law, remained unpunished; while the populace of Liege, where the bishop was a favorite, erected a chapel to the memory of the fearless ecclesiastic. The whole occurrence affords a curious and striking commentary on the immorality, lawlessness, and peculiar domestic habits of the Middle Ages in France.

Tradition has ascribed to Charles the assassination of his brother Grimwald, with whom he was to have shared his paternal inheritance; and the absence of any other known motive, the avowed hostility of his father, who imprisoned him, as well as the significant silence of the historians—evidently trembling under the stern rule of the Mayor of the Palace—give considerable probability to this hypothesis. Although disinherited, the attachment of the people was such that he was, immediately after the death of Pepin, rescued from a dungeon and raised to the dukedom. Succeeding events justified the wisdom of this measure. The address of Charles allayed the civil dissensions of the Franks; his valor and military genius awed and restrained the restless barbarians of Germany. Although unquestionably the preserver of Christianity, he is more than suspected of having been an idolater, his title, Martel, having been traced by antiquaries to the hammer of Thor, the emblem of the war-god of Scandinavia. He had no reverence for the Church, no belief in its doctrines, no consideration for its possessions, no regard for its ministers. He seized reliquaries and sacred vessels destined for communion with God, and coined them into money to pay the expenses of his campaigns. He despoiled the clergy of their lands and partitioned them among his followers. The most eminent of his captains he invested with the offices of bishops, after expelling the rightful incumbents in order to the better retain control of their confiscated estates. This sacrilegious policy, while it exasperated the priesthood, endeared him to his soldiers who were the recipients of his bounty; but the wrath of the ecclesiastical order was not appeased even by his inestimable services to its cause. Anathematized by popes and councils, legends inspired by monkish credulity and hatred have solemnly asserted that his soul had been repeatedly seen by holy men surrounded by demons in the depths of hell.

Of the personal characteristics, habits, and domestic life of Charles Martel we know absolutely nothing.

Equally silent is history as to the regulations of his capital, the constitution of his court, the rules of his military tactics, the principles of his government, the names of his councillors. The bitterness of ecclesiastical prejudice while it has cursed his memory has not been able to tarnish his renown. Historical justice has given him the full measure of credit due to his exploits, whose importance was not appreciated by his contemporaries, and has accorded him a high rank among the great military commanders of the world. Accustomed to arms from childhood, Charles had passed the greater portion of his life in camps. He had conquered Neustria, intimidated Burgundy, and had, in many successful expeditions against the formidable barbarians of the Rhine, left bloody evidences of his prowess as far as the banks of the Elbe and the Danube. He had laid claim to the suzerainty of Aquitaine in the name of the royal figure-head under whose authority he prosecuted his conquests; and Eudes had hitherto regarded his demonstrations with even greater fear and aversion than the periodical forays of the Saracens. Now, however, the crestfallen Duke of Aquitaine sought the presence of his ancient foe, did homage to him, and implored his aid. The practised eye and keen intellect of Charles discerned at once the serious nature of the impending danger, and with characteristic promptitude sought to avert it. His soldiers, living only in camps and always under arms, were ready to march at a moment's notice. Soon a great army was assembled, and, amidst the deafening shouts of the soldiery, the general of the Franks, confident of the superiority of his followers in endurance and discipline, advanced to meet the enemy. The latter, discouraged by the bold front presented by the inhabitants of Poitiers, who had been nerved to desperation by the memorable example of Bordeaux, had, in the mean time, raised the siege, and were marching towards Tours, attracted by the fame of the vast wealth of the Church and Abbey of St. Martin. Upon an immense plain between the two cities the rival hosts confronted each other. This same region, the centre of France, still cherished the remembrance of a former contest in which, centuries before, the Goths and Burgundians under command of Ætius had avenged the wrongs of Europe upon the innumerable hordes of Attila. Of good augury and a harbinger of success was this former victory regarded by the stalwart warriors of the North, now summoned a second time to check the progress of the barbarian flood of the Orient. Widely different in race, in language, in personal appearance, in religion, in military evolutions and in arms, each secretly dreading the result of the inevitable conflict and each unwilling to retire, for seven days the two armies remained without engaging, but constantly drawn up in battle array. Finally, unable to longer restrain the impetuosity of the Arabs, Abd-al-Rahman gave orders for the attack. With loud cries the light squadrons of Moorish cavalry, followed pell-mell by the vast mob of foot soldiers, hurled themselves upon the solid, steel-clad files of the Franks. But the latter stood firm—like a " wall of ice," in the quaint language of the ancient chronicler—the darts and arrows of the Saracens struck harmlessly upon helmet and cuirass, while the heavy swords and maces of the men-at-arms of Charles made frightful havoc among the half-naked bodies of their assailants. Night put an end to the battle, and the Franks, for the moment relieved from an ordeal which they had sustained with a courage worthy of their reputation, invoking the aid of their saints, yet not without misgivings for the morrow, slept upon their arms. At dawn the conflict was renewed with equal ardor and varying success until the afternoon, when a division of cavalry under the Duke of Aquitaine succeeded in turning the flank of the enemy, and began to pillage his camp. As the tidings of this misfortune spread through the ranks of the Moslems, large numbers deserted their standards and turned back to recover their booty, far more valuable in their estimation than even their own safety or the triumph of their cause. Great confusion resulted; the retreat became general; the Franks redoubled their efforts; and Abd-al-Rahman, endeavoring to rally his disheartened followers, fell pierced with a hundred wounds. That night, aided by the darkness, the Saracens silently withdrew, leaving their tents and heavy baggage behind. Charles, fearful of ambuscades, and having acquired great respect for the prowess of his adversaries, whose overwhelming numbers, enabling them to attack him in both front and rear, had seriously thinned his ranks, declined the pursuit, and with the spoils abandoned by the Saracens returned to his capital.

The Arabs have left us no account of the losses sustained in this battle. The mendacious monks, however, to whom by reason of their knowledge of letters was necessarily entrusted the task of recording the events of the time, have computed the loss of the invaders at three hundred and seventy-five thousand, probably thrice the number of all the combatants engaged; while that of the Franks is regarded as too insignificant to be mentioned. The very fact that Charles was disinclined to take advantage of the condition of his enemies loaded with plunder, deprived of their commander, and dejected by defeat, shows of itself that his army must have greatly suffered. The principal accounts that we possess of this battle, whose transcendent importance is recognized by every student of history, bear unmistakable evidence of the ecclesiastical partiality under whose influence they were composed. Monkish writers have exhausted their prolific imagination in recounting the miraculous intervention of the saints and the prowess of the champions of the Cross, which insured the preservation of Christianity. The Arabs, however, usually accurate and minute even in the relation of their misfortunes, have not paid the attention to this great event which its effect upon their fortunes would seem to warrant. Many ignore it altogether. Others pass it by with a few words. Some refer to it, not as a stubbornly contested engagement, but as a rout provoked by the disorders of an unwieldy multitude, inflamed with fanaticism, divided by faction, impatient of discipline. From such meagre and discordant materials must be constructed the narrative of one of the most momentous occurrences in the history of the world.

An account of the crushing defeat of Poitiers having been communicated to the Viceroy of Africa, he appointed Abd-al-Melik-Ibn-Kattan, an officer of the African army, Emir of Spain, and, presenting him with his commission, urgently exhorted him to avenge the reverse which had befallen the Moslem arms. The martial spirit of this commander, in whom the lapse of fourscore and ten years had not sensibly impaired the vigor of his mind or the activity of his body, was roused to enthusiasm by the prospect of an encounter with the idolaters of the North. Detained for a time in Cordova by the disturbances resulting from the disorganization of all branches of the government, he attempted, at the head of the remains of the defeated army and a reinforcement which had accompanied him from Africa, to thread the dangerous passes of the Pyrenees. But the time was ill-chosen; the rainy season was at hand; and the Saracens, hemmed in by impassable torrents, fell an easy prey to the missiles of an enterprising enemy. The march became a series of harassing skirmishes; and it was with the greatest difficulty that the Emir was enabled to extricate the remainder of his troops from the snare into which his want of caution had conducted them. Disgusted with the miscarriage of the expedition from whose results so much had been expected, Obeydallah, Viceroy of Africa, promptly deposed Abd-al-Melik, and nominated his own brother, Okbah-Ibn-al-Hejaj, to the vacant position. A martinet in severity and routine, Okbah enjoyed also a well-founded reputation for justice and integrity. He soon became the terror of the corrupt and tyrannical officials who infested the administration. He removed such as had been prominent for cruelty, fraud, or incompetency. To all who were guilty of peculation, or of even indirectly reflecting upon the honor and dignity of the Khalif, he was inexorable. With a view to insuring the safety of the highways, he formed a mounted police, the Kaschefs, in which may be traced the germ of the Hermandad of the fifteenth century and the modern Gendarmes and Civil Guards of France and Spain. From this institution, extended to the frontiers of Moslem territory as far as the Rhone, was derived the military organization of the Ribat—the prototype of the knightly orders of Calatrava, Alcantara, and Santiago, which played so conspicuous a part in the Reconquest. Okbah established a court in every village, so that all honest citizens might enjoy the protection of the law. His fostering care also provided each community with a school sustained by a special tax levied for that purpose. Devout to an almost fanatical degree, he erected a mosque whenever the necessities of the people seemed to demand it, and, thoroughly alive to the advantages of a religious education, he attached to every place of worship a minister who might instruct the ignorant in the doctrines of the Koran and the duties of a faithful

Mussulman. He repressed with an iron hand the ferocious spirit of the vagrant tribes of Berbers, whose kinsmen in Africa had, in many battles, formerly experienced the effects of his valor and discipline. By equalizing the taxation borne by different communities, he secured the gratitude of districts which had hitherto been oppressed by grievous impositions, rendered still more intolerable by the rapacity of unprincipled governors. No period in the history of the emirate was distinguished by such important and radical reforms as that included in the administration of Okbah-Ibn-al-Hejaj.

The Berbers, having engaged in one of their periodical revolts in Africa, Obeydallah, unable to make headway against them, sent a despatch requiring the immediate attendance of Okbah. The latter, at the head of a body of cavalry, crossed the strait, and, after a decisive battle, put the rebels to flight. His services were found so indispensable by the Viceroy that he kept him near his person in the capacity of councillor for four years, while he still enjoyed the title and emoluments of governor of Spain. In the meantime, the greatest disorders prevailed in the Peninsula. The salutary reforms which had employed the leisure and exercised the abilities of the prudent Viceroy were swept away; the old order of things was renewed; and the provinces of the emirate were disgraced by the revival of feuds, by the oppression of the weak, by the neglect of agriculture, by unchecked indulgence in peculation, and by the universal prevalence of anarchy and bloodshed.

The dread of Charles Martel and the ruthless barbarians under his command was wide-spread throughout the provinces of Southern France. Their excesses appeared the more horrible when contrasted with the tolerant and equitable rule of the Saracens who garrisoned the towns of Septimania. The Provençal, whose voluptuous habits led him to avoid the hardships of the camp, and whose religious ideas, little infected with bigotry, saw nothing repulsive in the law of Islam, determined to seek the aid of his swarthy neighbors of the South. As Charles had already ravaged the estates of Maurontius, Duke of Marseilles, only desisting when recalled by a revolt of the Saxons, that powerful noble, whose authority extended over the greater part of Provence, in anticipation of his return, entered into negotiations with Yusuf-Ibn-Abd-al-Rahman, wali of Narbonne; a treaty was concluded, by the terms of which the Arabs were invited to assume the suzerainty of Provence, many towns were ceded to them, and the counts rendered homage to the Moslem governor, who, in order to discharge his portion of the obligation and afford protection to his new subjects, assembled his forces upon the line of the northern frontier. It was at this time that Okbah was summoned to quell the rebellion of the Berbers just as he was upon the point of advancing to secure, by a powerful reinforcement, this valuable addition to his dominions.

Early in the year 737, Charles, having intimidated his enemies and secured a temporary peace, made preparations for an active campaign in Provence. Driving the Arabs out of Lyons, he advanced to the city of Avignon, whose natural position was recognized by both Franks and Saracens not only as a place of extraordinary strength but as the key of the valley of the Rhone. Experience and contact with their more civilized neighbors, the Italians, had instructed the Franks in the use of military engines; and, notwithstanding the desperate resistance of the Arab garrison, ably seconded by the inhabitants, Avignon was taken by storm. The population was butchered without mercy, and Charles, having completely glutted his vengeance by burning the city, left it a heap of smoking ruins.

Having been delayed by the stubborn opposition of Avignon, and urged by the clamors of his followers who thirsted for the rich spoils of Septimania, the Frankish general, leaving the fortified town of Arles in his rear, marched directly upon Narbonne. Thoroughly appreciating the political and military importance of this stronghold, the capital of their possessions in France, the Arabs had spared neither labor nor expense to render it impregnable. The city was invested and the siege pressed with vigor, but the fortifications defied the efforts of the besiegers and little progress was made towards its reduction. An expedition sent to reinforce it, making the approach by sea and attempting to ascend the river Aude, was foiled by the vigilance of Charles; the boats were stopped by palisades planted in the bed of the stream; the Saracens, harassed by the enemy's archers, were despatched with arrows or drowned in the swamps; and, of a considerable force, a small detachment alone succeeded in cutting its way through the lines of the besiegers and entering the city. The temper of the Franks was not proof, however, against the undaunted resolution of the Arab garrison. Unable to restrain the growing impatience of his undisciplined levies, Charles reluctantly abandoned the siege and endeavored to indemnify himself for his disappointment by the infliction of all the unspeakable atrocities of barbarian warfare upon the territory accessible to his arms. Over the beautiful plains of Provence and Languedoc, adorned with structures which recalled the palmiest days of Athenian and Roman genius, and whose population was the most polished of Western Europe, swept the fierce cavalry of the Alps and the Rhine. Agde, Maguelonne, and Béziers were sacked. The city of Nîmes, whose marvellous relics of antiquity are still the delight of the student and the antiquary, provoked the indignation of the invader by these marks of her intellectual superiority and former greatness. Her walls were razed; her churches plundered; her most eminent citizens carried away as hostages; her most splendid architectural monuments delivered to the flames. The massive arches of the Roman amphitheatre defied, however, the puny efforts of the enraged barbarian; but their blackened stones still exhibit the traces of fire, an enduring seal of the impotent malice of Charles Martel impressed in the middle of the eighth century.

In this memorable invasion the Arab colonists do not seem to have suffered so much as the indigenous population, which had long before incurred the enmity of the Franks. The ecclesiastical order met with scant courtesy at the hands of the idolaters. Despising the terrors of anathema and excommunication, Charles did not hesitate to appropriate the wealth of the Church wherever he could find it. Having inflicted all the damage possible upon the subjects and allies of the Khalif in Provence, the Franks, loaded with booty and driving before them a vast multitude of captives chained together in couples, returned in triumph to their homes.

This occupation of the Franks proved to be but temporary. The garrisons left in the towns whose walls were intact were insufficient to overawe the populace exasperated by the outrages it had just sustained. The Duke of Marseilles, seconded by the wali of Arles, easily regained control of the country around Avignon. But the return of Charles during the following year with his ally Liutprand, King of the Lombards, and a large army, not only recovered the lost territory but took Arles, hitherto exempt from capture, and drove the Saracens beyond the Rhone, which river for the future became their eastern boundary, a limit they were destined never again to pass.

The absence of Okbah encouraged the spirit of rebellion, ever rife in the Peninsula. He had hardly returned before the arts of intrigue and the discontent of the populace raised up a formidable rival to his authority. Abd-al-Melik-Ibn-Kattan, who had formerly been Emir, now usurped that office. In the civil war which followed, the fortunes of Abd-al-Melik soon received a powerful impulse by the death of his competitor at Carcassonne.

We now turn to the coast of Africa, a region which from first to last has exerted an extraordinary and always sinister influence over the destinies of the Mohammedan empire in Europe. The intractable character of the Berbers, and their aversion to the restraints of law and the habits of civilized life, had defied the efforts of the ablest soldiers and negotiators to control them. In consequence, the dominant Arab element was not disposed to conciliate savages who recognized no authority but that of force, and imposed upon them the most oppressive exactions, prompted partly by avarice and partly by tribal hatred. The impetus of Berber insurrection was communicated by contact and sympathy to the settlements of their kindred in Spain, where the spirit of insubordination under a less severe government made its outbreaks more secure, and, at the same time, more formidable. Obeydallah, the present Viceroy, was influenced by these feelings of scorn even more than a majority of his countrymen. A true Arab, educated in the best schools of Syria, of energetic character and bigoted impulses, he regarded the untamable tribesmen of Africa as below the rank of slaves. While collector of the revenue in Egypt he had provoked a rebellion of the Copts on account of an arbitrary increase of taxes, levied solely because the tributaries were infidels. Under his rule the lot of the Berbers became harder than ever. Their flocks, which constituted their principal wealth, were wantonly slaughtered to provide wool for the couches of the luxurious nobility of Damascus. Their women were seized, to be exposed in the slave-markets of Cairo and Antioch. Their tributes were doubled at the caprice of the governor, in whose eyes the life of a misbeliever was of no more consideration than that of a wild beast, for, being enjoyed under protest, it could be forfeited at the will of his superior. Day by day the grievances of the Berbers became more unendurable, and the thirst for liberty and vengeance kept pace with the ever-increasing abuses which had provoked it. At first the tribes, while professedly Mussulman, in reality remained idolaters, fetich-worshippers, the pliant tools of conjurers and charlatans. Over the whole nation a priesthood—by snake-charming, by the interpretation of omens, by spurious miracles, by the arts of sorcery—had acquired unbounded influence; and the names of these impostors, canonized after death, were believed to have more power to avert misfortune than the invocation of the Almighty. In time, however, the zealous labors of exiled Medinese and Persian nonconformists had supplanted the grosser forms of this superstition by a religion whose fervor was hardly equalled by that displayed by the most fanatical Companion of Mohammed. The scoffing and polished Arabs of Syria, of whom the Viceroy was a prominent example, Pagan by birth and infidel in belief and practice, were sedulously represented as the enemies of Heaven and the hereditary revilers of the Prophet, whom it was a duty to destroy. These revolutionary sentiments, received in Africa with applause, were diffused through Spain by the tide of immigration, in which country, as elsewhere, they were destined soon to produce the most important political results. The Berbers, wrought up to a pitch of ungovernable fury, now only awaited a suitable opportunity to inaugurate the most formidable revolt which had ever menaced the Mohammedan government of Africa. In the year 740 an increased contribution was demanded of the inhabitants of Tangier, whose relations with the savages of the neighboring mountains had prevented the conversion of the former to Islam. A division of the army was absent in Sicily, and the Berbers, perceiving their advantage, rose everywhere against their oppressors. They stormed Tangier, expelled the garrisons of the seacoast cities, elected a sovereign, and defeated in rapid succession every force sent against them. The pride and resentment of the Khalif Hischem at last impelled him to despatch a great army against his rebellious subjects. It numbered seventy thousand, and was commanded by a distinguished Syrian officer, Balj-Ibn-Beshr, who was ordered to put to death without mercy every rebel who might fall into his hands and to indulge the troops in all the license of indiscriminate pillage. Marching towards the west, the Syrian general encountered the Berbers on the plain of Mulwiyah. The naked bodies and inferior weapons of the insurgents provoked the contempt of the soldiers of the Khalif, who expected an easy victory; but the resistless impulse of the barbarians supplied the want of arms and discipline, and the Syrians were routed with the loss of two-thirds of their number. Some ten thousand horsemen, under command of Balj, cut their way through the enemy and took refuge in Ceuta. The Berbers, aware of the impossibility of reducing that place, ravaged the neighborhood for miles around, and, having blockaded the town on all sides, the Syrians, unable to escape or to obtain provisions, were threatened with a lingering death by famine.

Abd-al-Melik, Emir of Spain, was a native of Medina. Half a century before he had been prominent in the Arab army at the battle of Harra, the bloody prelude to the sack of the Holy City and the enslavement and exile of its citizens. To him, in vain, did the Syrian general apply for vessels in which to cross the strait. The Arab chieftain, bearing upon his body many scars inflicted by the spears of Yezid's troopers and who had seen his family and his neighbors massacred before his face, now exulted in the prospect of an unhoped-for revenge; and, for the complete accomplishment of his purpose, he issued stringent orders against supplying the unfortunate Syrians with supplies. The sympathy of Zeyad-Ibn-Amru, a wealthy resident of Cordova, was aroused by the account of their sufferings, and he imprudently fitted out two vessels for their relief; which act of insubordination having been communicated to the Emir, he ordered Zeyad to be imprisoned, and, having put out his eyes, impaled him, in company with a dog, a mark of ignominy inflicted only on the worst of criminals.

The news of the decisive victory obtained by the Berbers over the army of the Khalif was received with pride and rejoicing by all of their countrymen in Spain. The efforts of the missionaries, aided by the fiery zeal of their proselytes, had infused into the population of the North, composed largely of African colonists, a spirit of fanaticism which threatened to carry everything before it. In a moment the Berbers of Aragon, Galicia, and Estremadura sprang to arms. Uniting their forces they elected officers; then, organized in three divisions, they prepared to dispute the authority of the Emir in the strongholds of his power. One body marched upon Cordova, another invested Toledo, and the third directed its course towards Algeziras, with designs upon the fleet, by whose aid they expected to massacre the Syrians in Ceuta and to collect a body of colonists sufficient to destroy the haughty Arab aristocracy of the Peninsula and found an independent kingdom, Berber in nationality, schismatic and precisian in religion.

And now were again exhibited the singular inconsistencies and remarkable effects of the fatal antagonism of race. The critical condition of Abd-al-Melik compelled him to implore the support of his Syrian foes, whom he hated with far more bitterness than he did his rebellious subjects, and who were also thoroughly cognizant of his feelings towards them as well as of the political necessity which prompted his advances. A treaty was executed, by whose terms the Syrians were to be transported into Spain and pledged their assistance to crush the rebellion, and, after this had been accomplished, the Emir agreed to land them in Africa upon a territory which acknowledged the jurisdiction of the Khalif. Hostages selected from their principal officers were delivered by the half-famished refugees, and they embarked for Andalusia, where the policy of the government and the sympathy of the people supplied them with food, clothing, and arms, and their drooping spirits soon revived. These experienced soldiers, united with the forces of Abd-al-Melik, attacked and routed with ease, one after another, the three Berber armies. All of the plunder which the latter had collected fell into their hands, in addition to that secured by expeditions into the now undefended country of their enemies. His apprehensions concerning the Berbers having been removed, Abd-al-Melik now became anxious to relieve his dominions of the presence of allies whose success rendered them formidable. But the allurements of soil and climate had made the Syrians reluctant to abandon the beautiful land of Andaluz,—the region where they had accumulated so much wealth, the scene where their efforts had been crowned with so much glory. Disputes arose between their leader and the Emir concerning the interpretation of the treaty; the Syrian general, conscious of his power, lost no opportunity to provoke the fiery temper of Abd-al-Melik; and, at last, taking advantage of a favorable occasion, he expelled the latter from his capital. Balj, elected to the viceroyalty by his command, proceeded at once to extend and confirm his newly acquired authority. The hostages confined near Algeziras were released, and their accounts of harsh treatment enraged their companions, who recalled their own sufferings and the inhumanity of Abd-al-Melik during their blockade in Ceuta. With loud cries they demanded the death of the Emir. The efforts of their officers to stem the torrent were futile; a mob dragged the venerable prince from his palace, and, taking him to the bridge outside the city of Cordova, crucified him between a dog and a hog, animals whose contact is suggestive of horrible impurity to a Mussulman and whose very names are epithets of vileness and contempt. Thus perished ignominiously this stout old soldier, who could boast of the purest blood of the Koreish; who had witnessed the wonderful changes of three eventful generations; who had seen service under the standard of Islam in Arabia, Egypt, Al-Maghreb, France, and Spain; who had bravely defended the tomb of the Prophet at Medina, and had confronted with equal resolution the mail-clad squadrons of Charles upon the banks of the Rhone; who had twice administered in troublous times the affairs of the Peninsula; and who now, long past that age when men seek retirement from the cares of public life, still active and vigorous, was sacrificed, through his own imprudence, to the irreconcilable hatred of tribal antagonism. An act of such atrocity, without considering the prominence of the victim, the nationality of the participants, or the degree of provocation, was, independent of its moral aspect, highly impolitic and most prejudicial to the interests of the revolutionists. The Syrians became practically isolated in a foreign country. The sons of Abd-al-Melik, who held important commands in the North, assembled a great army. Reinforcements were furnished by the governor of Narbonne, and the fickle Berbers joined in considerable numbers the ranks of their former adversaries.

At a little village called Aqua-Portera, not far from Cordova, the Arabs and Berbers attacked the foreigners, who had enlisted as their auxiliaries a number of criminals and outlaws. In the battle which followed the latter were victorious, but lost their general Balj, who fell in a single combat with the governor of Narbonne. The Syrians, whose choice was immediately confirmed by the Khalif, elected as his successor, Thalaba-Ibn-Salamah, a monster whose name was afterwards stained with acts of incredible infamy. His inhumanity was proverbial. His troops gave no quarter. The wives and children of his opponents, whose liberty even the most violent of his party had respected, were enslaved. Other victims he had previously exposed at auction before the gates of Cordova, under circumstances of the grossest cruelty and humiliation. The most illustrious of these were nobles of the party of Medina. By an exquisite refinement of insult he caused them to be disposed of to the lowest, instead of the highest, bidder, and even bartered publicly for impure and filthy animals the descendants of the friends of Mohammed, members of the proudest families of the aristocracy of Arabia. But the atrocities of Thalaba had already alienated many of the adherents of his own party as well as terrified those of the opposite faction, who had no mercy to expect at the hands of a leader who neither observed the laws of war nor respected the faith of treaties. Upon the application of these citizens, most of them men of high rank and influential character, the Viceroy of Africa sent Abu-al-Khattar to supersede the sanguinary Thalaba. He arrived just in time to rescue the unhappy Berbers, many of them Moslems, who were already ranged in order for systematic massacre. His power was soon felt; and by banishing the leaders of the insurgents; by granting a general amnesty; by an ample distribution of unsettled territory; and by conferring upon the truculent strangers a portion of the public revenues, an unusual degree of peace and security was soon assured to the entire Peninsula. In accordance with a policy adopted many years before, the various colonists were assigned to districts which bore some resemblance, in their general features, to the land of their nativity, a plan which offered the additional advantage of separating these turbulent spirits from each other, thus rendering mutual co-operation difficult, if not impossible, in any enterprise affecting the safety or permanence of the central power.

The first months of the administration of Abu-al-Khattar were distinguished by a degree of forbearance and charity unusual amidst the disorder which now prevailed in every province of the Moslem empire. But his partisans had wrongs to avenge, and the Emir had not the moral courage to resist the importunate demands of his kindred. An unjust judicial decision provoked reproach; insult led to bloodshed; the fiery Maadites rushed to arms; and once more the Peninsula assumed its ordinary aspect of political convulsion and civil war. Al-Samil and Thalaba, two captains of distinction, obtained the supremacy; the Emir was imprisoned, then rescued, and, after several ineffectual attempts to regain his authority, put to death. Having overpowered its adversary, the triumphant Maadite faction gratified its revengeful impulses to the utmost by plunder, torture, and assassination. At length the condition of affairs becoming intolerable, and no prospect existing of relief from the East, where the candidates of rival tribes contended for the tempting prize of the khalifate, a council of officers was convoked, and Yusuf-Abd-al-Rahman-al-Fehri was unanimously chosen governor of Spain.

This commander had, by many years of faithful service in France, by strict impartiality in his decisions, and by a bravery remarkable among a people with whom the slightest sign of cowardice was an indelible disgrace, won the respect and admiration of his contemporaries. His lineage was high, his person attractive, his manners dignified and courteous. He had defended Narbonne against the power of Charles Martel, whose army, flushed with victory and animated by the presence of the great Mayor of the Palace himself, had been unable to shake his confidence or disturb his equanimity. But his eminent qualifications for the position to which he was now called did not depend upon his former services and his personal merit so much as upon the absence which had kept him from all the entanglements and intrigues of faction. Thus it was that the fiercest partisans hailed his election as a harbinger of peace and concord; a wise stroke of policy that might reconcile the antagonistic pretensions of the nobles of Damascus and Medina; curb the lawlessness of the Berbers; and restore the Emirate of the West to that tranquillity and prosperity it had at long intervals enjoyed, and of which the memory, like a half-forgotten tradition, alone remained. This illegal act of the officers was without hesitation sanctioned by the Khalif Merwan, who prudently overlooked the spirit of independence implied by its exercise on account of its evident wisdom and the imperative necessity which had dictated it.

The disorders of the unhappy Peninsula had, however, become incurable under the present conditions of government. All the skill and experience of Yusuf were exhausted in fruitless attempts at the adjustment of territorial disputes and the pacification of feuds which a generation of internecine conflict had engendered. An insurrection broke out in Septimania, a province hitherto exempt from similar disturbances. Ahmed-Ibn-Amru, wali of Seville, whom Yusuf had removed from the command of the fleet, a chief of the Koreish, whose vast estates enabled him to surpass the magnificence of the Emir himself, and an aspirant for supreme power, organized and headed a formidable conspiracy. His name was associated with the early triumphs of Islam, for he was the great-grandson of the ensign who had borne the standard of Mohammed at the battle of Bedr. Prompted by unusual audacity, which was confirmed by the possession of wealth, ability, and power, he asserted that he had received the commission of the Abbasides as Viceroy of Spain. The Asturians, emboldened by the quarrels of their foes, leaving their mountain fastnesses, began to push their incursions far to the southward. The entire country was engaged in hostilities. Every occupation but that of warfare was suspended. The herdsman was robbed of his flocks. The fertile fields were transformed into a barren waste. On all sides were the mournful tokens of misery and want; from palace and hut rose the moan of the famishing or the wail for the dead. Intercourse between the neighboring cities, alienated by hostility or fearful of marauders, ceased. The doubtful tenure of authority, dependent upon the incessant changes of administration, made it impossible for the Christians to ascertain to whom tribute was rightfully due, and this confusion of interests often subjected them to the injustice of double, and even treble, taxation. At no time in the history of Spain, since the irruption of the Goths, had such a condition of anarchy and social wretchedness prevailed; when the inspiration of a few Syrian chieftains brought the existing chaos to an end, by the introduction of a new ruler and the re-establishment of a dynasty whose princes, the tyrants of Damascus, had hitherto reflected little more than odium and derision on the Moslem name.

The history of Spain under the emirs presents a melancholy succession of tragic events arising from antipathy of race, political ambition, religious zeal, and private enmity. An extraordinary degree of instability, misrule, distrust, and avarice characterized their administration. The revolutions which constantly afflicted the Khalifate of Damascus exercised no inconsiderable influence over the viceregal capitals of Kairoan and Cordova. The Ommeyade princes of Syria lived in constant apprehension of death by violence. The methods by which they had arisen in many instances contributed to their overthrow. The assassin of yesterday often became the victim of to-day. The perpetration of every crime, the indulgence in every vice, by the Successors of the Prophet, diminished the faith and loyalty of their subjects and seriously affected the prestige and divine character believed to attach to their office. The subordinates necessarily shared the odium and ignominy of their superiors. The Emir of Spain labored under a twofold disadvantage. He held under the Viceroy of Africa, while the latter was appointed directly by the Khalif. This division of authority and responsibility was not conducive to the interests of good government, social order, or domestic tranquillity. The people of the Peninsula, subject to the caprices of a double tyranny, could not be expected to feel much reverence for the supreme potentate of their government and religion thirteen hundred miles away. With the accession of each ruler arose fresh pretexts for the exercise of every resource of extortion. The rapacity of these officials rivalled in the ingenuity of its devices and the value of its returns the exactions of the Roman proconsuls. The methods by which the majority of them maintained their power provoked universal execration. Under such political conditions, loyalty, union, and commercial prosperity were impossible. The ancient course of affairs—an order which had existed for three hundred years—had been rudely interrupted. Even under favorable auspices the foundation of a government and the reorganization of society would have been tasks fraught with many perplexities and dangers. The Visigothic empire had, it is true, been subdued, but its national spirit, its religion, and its traditions remained. The changes of Moslem governors were sudden and frequent. The average duration of an emir's official life was exactly twenty-seven months. It required the exertion of the greatest wisdom, of the most enlightened statesmanship, to avert the calamities which must necessarily result from the collision between a heterogeneous populace subjected suddenly to the will of a still more heterogeneous mass of foreigners; to reconcile the interests of adverse factions; to appease the demands of wild barbarians unaccustomed to be denied; to decide alike profound questions of policy and frivolous disputes connected with the various gradations of ecclesiastical dignity, of hereditary rank, of military distinction, and of social precedence. The inflexibility of the Arab character, the assumed superiority of the Arab race, the unquenchable fires of tribal hatred, the necessity of maintaining the rights accorded under solemn treaties to the vanquished, enhanced a hundred-fold the difficulties which confronted the sovereign. As an inevitable consequence a chronic state of disorder prevailed. The authority of the Khalifs of Damascus was in fact but nominal, and was never invoked except to countenance revolt or to assure the obedience of those who faltered in their loyalty to the emirs, the actual rulers of Spain. But, despite these serious impediments, the genius of the Arabian people advanced rapidly in the path of civilization, while the dense and sluggish intellect of the northern barbarians, who, in their origin, were not less ignorant, remained stationary. It took Spain, under the Moslems, less than half a century to reach a point in human progress which was not attained by Italy under the popes in a thousand years. The capacity of the Arab mind to absorb, to appropriate, to invent, to develop, to improve, has no parallel in the annals of any race. The empire of the khalifs included an even greater diversity of climate and nations than that of Rome. The ties of universal brotherhood proclaimed by the Koran; the connections demanded by the requirements of an extended commerce; the intimate associations encouraged by the pilgrimage to Mecca, awakened the curiosity and enlarged, in an equal degree, the minds of the Moslems of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Yet more important than all was the effect of the almost incessant hostilities waged against the infidel. By its constantly varying events, its fascinations, its thrilling excitements, its dangers, its victories, defeats, and triumphs, war has a remarkable tendency to expand the intellectual faculties, and thereby to advance the cause of truth and promote the improvement of every branch of useful knowledge. The advantages derived from travel, experience, and conquest the Moslems brought with them into the Spanish Peninsula. Under the emirate, however, these were constantly counteracted by the ferocious and indomitable character of the Berbers. The latter did not forget the part they had taken in the Conquest. It was one of their countrymen who had led the victorious army. It was the irresistible onset of their cavalry which had pierced the Gothic lines on the Guadalete. The rapidity of their movements, the impetuosity of their attacks, had awed and subdued, in a few short months, the populous states of a mighty empire. Scarcely had they begun to enjoy the pleasures of victory before the greed of an hereditary enemy of their race snatched from their hands the well-earned fruits of their valor. Their commander was imprisoned, insulted, and disgraced. Their plunder was seized. Those who evinced a desire for a sedentary life were assigned to the bleak and sterile plains of La Mancha, Aragon, and Galicia, while the Arabs of Syria and the Hedjaz divided among themselves the glorious regions of the South, which tradition had designated as the Elysian Fields of the ancients. The arrogant disposition of these lords heaped upon their Berber vassals every outrage which malice could devise or tyranny execute. The accident of African extraction was sufficient to exclude the most accomplished and capable soldier from an office of responsibility under the Khalifate of Damascus. In Spain, as in Al-Maghreb, the fairest virgins of the Berber camps were torn from the arms of their parents to replenish the harems of the Orient. Under such circumstances, it is not strange that the acute sensibilities of a proud and independent people should have been deeply wounded by the infliction of every fresh indignity, and their disaffection endanger the stability of the new government and imperil the institutions of religion itself by fostering the violent spirit of tribal animosity, that ominous spectre which constantly haunted with its fearful presence the society of city and hamlet, and stalked grimly and in menacing silence in the very shadow of the throne.

The moral and political aspect of the Western world coincided in many particulars with that of Spain during the age of transition which preceded the establishment of the Khalifate of Cordova. Of all the states which had composed the vast fabric of the Roman Empire scarcely one was at peace with its neighbors or exempt from the calamities incident to religious discord and civil war. The scanty remains of art and learning which had escaped the fury of the barbarians had taken refuge in Constantinople, now the intellectual centre of Europe. The noble productions of the ancients had, however, been cast aside with contempt for the homilies of the Fathers, and arguments concerning the miraculous virtues of images, together with daily riots and chariot-races, engaged the attention and amused the leisure of the weak and pusillanimous Byzantine, whose character, deformed by abject vices, had long since forfeited all right to the honored name of Roman. The turbulent populace of that great city, which virtually dictated the edicts of its rulers, protected by its impregnable walls, had seen, with craven indifference, its environs plundered and its sovereignty defied by the powers of Persian, Goth, and Saracen. The genius and energy of its founder had been supplanted by the superstitions and cruelties of a succession of feeble tyrants, whose manifold crimes were now, for a short interval, redeemed by the martial talents and political virtues of Leo the Isaurian.

In Italy, the peace of society was disturbed by the iconoclastic heresy and the disorders which accompanied the foundation of a republic, commotions destined soon to provoke the interference of the Lombards and the subsequent impolitic alliance with those perfidious barbarians. The stern and uncompromising character of Gregory the Great had established the Church upon a basis so solid that the efforts of all its enemies have to this day been unable to prevail against it; and the sagacity of this distinguished pontiff had vindicated the policy of a system prompted by the inspiration of almost superhuman wisdom, sanctified by the precepts of antiquity, strengthened by the enthusiasm of its saints and martyrs, and confirmed by the prescription of centuries.

No country in Europe during the eighth century exhibited such a picture of unredeemed barbarism as Britain. The Romans had never been able to more than temporarily establish their institutions in that island. The legions with difficulty held in subjection a people whom neither force nor the arts of persuasion could make amenable to the benefits of civilized life. The cruel rites which characterized the worship of the Druids had been abolished, but the elegant mythology of Italy obtained no hold upon the minds of the degraded aborigines, who welcomed with delight the savage ceremonies which were performed around the altars of the Scandinavian Woden. Upon this uncongenial soil the refining genius of Rome left no permanent traces of its occupancy, no splendid memorials of its art and culture. The nature of the transitory impressions emanating from the possession of Britain by the masters of the world was disclosed by the crushing misfortunes which befell the empire in the fifth century. Unable to sustain the cares of government, hostile chieftains abandoned the island to all the woes of anarchy, and partisan jealousy invoked the perilous aid of the pirates of Germany, whose dominion was finally established only by a war of extermination involving both ally and foe. The obscurity of the British annals concerning the period under consideration, dense of itself, is increased by the popular acceptance of myth and legend as historic truth. The chroniclers of Western Europe, however, have made us acquainted with the national character of the Saxons. We know that in Britain the customs of the aborigines and the laws of the empire were alike abrogated; that no worship prevailed but the basest form of idolatry; that every vestige of Roman institutions was swept away; that the religion whose maxims had been proclaimed by the eloquence of Augustin was extirpated; and that the voice of faction which had evoked this barbarian tempest was silenced in the convulsions which preceded the foundation of the Saxon Heptarchy. The island, whose name is now the most familiar one known to mankind, became more mysterious than it had been in the remotest ages of antiquity; the country whose constitution is now inseparably associated with the enjoyment of the largest measure of freedom was then noted as the most advantageous market for the purchase of slaves. In the cultivated society of Constantinople, learned men believed that Britain was a region of pestilence and horrors, whither, as to a place of eternal punishment, the spirits of the Franks were ferried at midnight by a tribe of weird fishermen, who, by reason of this service, were exempted from certain burdens and enjoyed peculiar privileges. Among the luxurious ecclesiastics of Gaul, the slaves imported from Britain were greatly esteemed as being both cheap and serviceable; and the sacred office of priest or abbot was not degraded by the ownership of hapless beings in whose unnatural parents the feelings of humanity and the instincts of affection had been subordinated to the debasing passion of avarice.

The general complexion of affairs in Gaul offered a striking analogy to that prevailing in Spain at the time of the subversion of the kingdom of the Visigoths. In one respect, however, a difference more apparent than real existed; no monarch was deluded by the professed allegiance, and was at the same time constantly threatened by the treasonable plots of his subjects. A dynasty of puppet kings, restricted to a limited territory, displayed amidst every temptation to sensual indulgence the idle pomp of sovereignty. A race of hardy warriors and statesmen, ignorant of letters, experienced in arms, controlled, by the power of military enthusiasm and the superior influence of diplomatic ability, the destinies of the Frankish nation. With the exception of the clergy, whose attainments were at the best but superficial, the people were plunged into the deepest ignorance. In the regions of the North and East the influence of the idolatrous Germans and Scandinavians had retarded the progress of Christianity. Elsewhere, however, a mongrel religion, in which were incorporated the mummeries of polytheistic worship, the degrading superstitions and sanguinary rites of the Saxons, and the worst features of the Arian heresy, prevailed. This debased form of faith, which recognized neither the tolerance of Paganism nor the charity of the Gospel, satisfied the spiritual requirements of a barbarian populace. In one province idolatry was practised. In another, the principles of Christianity were in the ascendant. Not infrequently these forms of worship existed side by side; and within the sound of the cathedral bell the incense of sacrifice rose from the altars of the Teutonic deities, or the haruspex exercised his mysterious office, and, grovelling in the steaming vitals of the newly slaughtered victim, read, in the shape of the liver or the folds of the entrails, the signs of the future and the unerring decrees of fate.

Wherever the authority of the Roman Pontiff prevailed, the inclination to a monastic life predominated among all classes of society. Virgins of the wealthiest families, warriors of the greatest renown, alike voluntarily sought the retirement of the cloister, amidst the congratulations of their relatives and the applause of their companions. When the attractions of the world were too powerful to be resisted, the proudest chieftains compromised with conscience either by the donation of their serfs to the abodes consecrated to the service of God, or by the ransom and purchase of slaves to increase the lordly abbot's imposing retinue. In the foundation of religious houses in France there existed an emulation unknown to any other country embraced in the spiritual domain of the Papacy. The fame and piety of the patron of one of these establishments was in a direct proportion to the number of recluses whom his riches or his influence was able to assemble within its walls. As a consequence, no inconsiderable portion of the population of France was devoted to a conventual life, and the number of monks congregated in a single monastery was prodigious, in many instances amounting to as many as eight hundred. The generosity and devotion of the founder of a religious community were certain to be rewarded with the coveted honor of canonization, and records of the Gallic Church during the first half of the eighth century include the names of more saints than any corresponding period in the history of Latin Christianity. Liberality to these holy institutions was esteemed not only a virtue of supreme excellence but a certain proof of orthodoxy, and their vaults enclosed treasures whose value was sedulously exaggerated by the vanity of the clergy and the credulity of the rabble. The accounts of the enormous wealth of these establishments, disseminated far and wide through the garrulity of pilgrims and travellers, by stimulating the cupidity of the Arabs and inciting them to crusade and colonization, produced a decided effect upon the political fortunes and social organization of France, and through France indirectly upon those of all Europe.

Rudeness, brutality, coarse licentiousness, affected sanctity, and barbaric splendor were the prominent characteristics of the society constituted by the nominal sovereigns and their courts, the mayors of the palace and their retainers, and the lazy ecclesiastics who swarmed in every portion of the dominions of the Merovingian princes. The will of the most powerful noble was the law of the land. Apprehension of intestine warfare and the mutual jealousy and unscrupulous ambition of the feudal lords perpetually discouraged the industry of the husbandman. A feeling of indifference pervaded the ranks of the ignorant populace, stupidly content with the pleasures of a mere animal existence. The priesthood, assiduous in the exactions of tithes, evinced a marked repugnance to contribute pecuniary aid in times of national emergency when even their own existence was imperilled. Unnatural crimes, fratricide, incest, and nameless offences against public decency were common. Concubinage was universally prevalent among the wealthy. In a practice so fatal to the purity of domestic life the clergy obtained a disgraceful preeminence, and in the cloistered seclusion of convents and monasteries, those apparent seats of austerity and devotion, were enacted with impunity scenes which shrank from the publicity of cities and indicated the alarming and hopeless extent of ecclesiastical depravity.

In the provinces of the South, formerly subject to the jurisdiction of the Visigoths, a greater degree of intelligence and a more polished intercourse existed, the inheritance of the ancient colonists who had bequeathed to their posterity the traditions of Roman luxury and Grecian culture. Here, upon the shores of the Mediterranean and in the valley of the Rhone, the gifts of nature were better adapted to progress in the arts; the climate was more propitious to the intellectual development of the masses. While social equality was yet strictly observed in the assemblies of the Teutons and the Franks, the pride of aristocracy here first asserted its superior claims to consideration. It was from this region, favored by its geographical position, its commercial relations, and its sympathy with the philosophical ideas and literary aspirations of the inhabitants of Moslem Spain, that was to spread the refining influence of chivalry and letters afterwards so prominently displayed in the courts of the Albigensian princes.

The unsatisfactory nature of the information afforded by the defective chronicles of the eighth century is a serious impediment to the satisfactory elucidation of events whose paramount importance has been recognized by every historian. A lamentable want of detail, and an utter absence of philosophical discrimination, are the characteristic traits of these illiterate annalists. Of the gradual unfolding of national character; of the secret motives which actuated the rude but dexterous statesmen of that epoch; of the incessant mutations of public policy; of the silent but powerful revolutions effected by the inexorable laws of nature and the failings of humanity, they tell us next to nothing. And yet no period mentioned in history has been more prolific of great events. No achievement of ancient or modern times was perfected with such rapidity or produced such decided effects upon the intellectual progress of the human race as the Mohammedan Conquest of Spain. The valor of the idolater, Charles Martel, prepared the way for the vast empire and boundless authority of Charlemagne. The zeal of his orthodox successor assured the permanence and supremacy of the Holy See. Upon the success or failure of the Moslem crusade hung, as in a balance, the political fortunes of Europe and the religious destiny of the world. The battle of Poitiers was not, as is generally asserted, a contest between the champions of two hostile forms of faith, for the army of the Franks was largely composed of Pagans, and the ranks of the invaders were filled with Berbers, Jews, and infidels. Moslem zealots, like those who had shared the bitter privations of the Prophet, who had upheld his falling banner at Ohod, who had prevailed over fearful odds commanded by the bravest generals of the Roman and Persian empires, who had witnessed the capture of Damascus and Jerusalem, were rare in that motley host of adventurers whose religion was frequently a disguise assumed for the ignoble purpose of rapine. The fierce ardor and invincible spirit of the original Mussulmans had departed. A tithe of the fiery enthusiasm which had evoked the astonishment and consternation of their early antagonists must have changed the fortunes of that eventful day.

Upon the other hand, the Franks were not inspired with zeal for the maintenance of any religious principle. Their fickle homage was paid to Zernbock and Woden, the sanguinary gods of the German forests, or to that weird priesthood which delivered its oracles from the cromlechs of Brittany. The pressing requirements of the emergency, the prospect of plunder and glory, had summoned the warriors of a hundred tribes from the banks of the Danube to the limits of Scandinavia. So little were these wild barbarians entitled to the appellation of Christians that they were, even then, under the ban of ecclesiastical displeasure, and had been loaded with anathemas for the sacrilegious use of the property of the Church to avert the danger impending over Christendom. But leaving out of consideration the motives which actuated the combatants, there can be no question as to the decisive results of the battle of Poitiers. It was one of the few great victories which, like conspicuous landmarks in the pathway of human affairs, indicate the advancement or the retardation of nations. The prospect of Mohammedan conquest had long been the terror of Europe. The Pope trembled in the Vatican. The pious devotee, as he prostrated himself before the image of his patron saint, vowed an additional penance to ward off the calamity which every day was expected to bring forth. Imagination and fear painted the Saracens as a race of incarnate fiends, whose aspect was far more frightful, whose atrocities were far more ruthless, than those of the Huns who had been routed by Ætius four hundred years before on the plains of Chalons. The lapse of twelve centuries has not sufficed to dispel this superstitious dread, and the Saracen, as a monster and a bugbear, still figures in the nursery tales and rhymes of Central France.

The Spanish Emirate includes the most obscure epoch of Moslem annals. Its events have been, for the most part, preserved only by tradition. Its chronicles are chaotic, defective, and contradictory. Its dates are confused. It abounds in anachronisms; in the confusion of localities; in the multiplication of individuals under a variety of names. The credulity and prejudice of annalists, few of whom were contemporaneous with the occurrences they profess to describe, render their statements suspicious or absolutely unworthy of belief. With such drawbacks attainment to accuracy is manifestly impracticable, and a reasonable degree of probability can alone be hoped for from the baffled and perplexed historian.

Exactly a hundred and ten years had elapsed since Mohammed fled from Mecca like a common malefactor, under sentence of execution by the leaders of his tribe, with a reward of a thousand pieces of gold upon his head, and Islam was regarded as the dream of a half-demented enthusiast. Now the name of the Prophet was revered from the Indies to the Atlantic. The new sect numbered its adherents by millions. Its arms had invariably been victorious. Its energy had surmounted every obstacle. The most venerated shrines of Christianity and the cradle of that religion,—Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, and Jerusalem,—places associated with all that is dear to the followers of our Saviour, and made sacred by miracle, legend, and tradition, were in its hands. Rome and Constantinople, the remaining great centres of Christian faith—the one destined to be attacked by the Moslems of Sicily, the other now menaced by the Moslems of Spain—trembled for their safety. Saracen fleets were already cruising in the eastern Mediterranean. The Mussulman standard had been planted on the Loire, thirty-six hundred miles distant from Mecca. In every country into which Islam had penetrated, it had found faithful allies and adherents. Religious indifference, public oppression, the burdens of feudalism, and the evils of slavery paved the way for its acceptance. The Jews opened the gates of cities. The leaders of depressed factions contributed to the ruin of their countrymen with purse and sword. Vassals and slaves apostatized by thousands. Most ominous of all, the test of spiritual truth and inspiration invariably dependent, in the estimation of the credulous, upon superiority in arms, was steadily on the side of the infidel. It is not strange, therefore, that Christian Europe looked with undisguised dismay upon the portentous advance of the Mussulman power. It is a matter of some doubt whether the doctrines of Mohammed could have obtained a permanent foothold in the frozen regions of the North. The geographical distribution of religions is largely determined by climate. Islam is essentially exotic. It has survived, but never flourished, beyond the tropics. A learned historian has advanced the hypothesis that it cannot exist in a latitude where the olive does not grow, a statement which seems to be justified by the experience of history. It is highly improbable that the dogmas and customs of the Orient would have found, under a leaden sky and amidst the chilling blasts of Holland and Germany, conditions propitious to their propagation. Important modifications must have resulted, and, with these modifications, religious and social revolution. The steadiness and prowess of the Teutonic soldiery had forever assured the safety of Europe from serious molestation by the princes of the Hispano-Arab empire. The irregular and ill-concerted attacks, which subsequently followed at long intervals, were easily repulsed. Whether the world at large was profited by the victory of Charles Martel may, in the light afforded by the brilliant results of Moslem civilization, well be questioned. It is hardly possible to conjecture what effect would have been produced upon the creeds and habits of the present age by the triumph of the Saracen power, but, in the words of an eminent writer, "the least of our evils had now been that we should have worn turbans; combed our beards instead of shaving them; have beheld a more magnificent architecture than the Grecian, while the public mind had been bounded by the arts and literature of the Moorish University of Cordova."

CHAPTER VII

FOUNDATION OF THE SPANISH MONARCHY

718–757

The Northern Provinces of Spain—Their Desolate and Forbidding Character — Climate — Population — Religion — Peculiarities of the Asturian Peasantry—Pelayus—His Birth and Antecedents—He collects an Army—Obscure Origin of the Spanish Kingdom—Extraordinary Conditions under which it was founded—Battle of Covadonga—Rout of the Arabs—Increase of the Christian Power—Favila—Alfonso I.—His Enterprise and Conquests—His Policy of Colonization—Survival of the Spirit of Liberty—Religious Abuses—State of Society—Beginning of the Struggle for Empire.

THE general topography of the Spanish Peninsula exhibits a gradual and continuous increase in altitude, beginning at the tropical plains of Andalusia and terminating in the mountain range which traverses its northern extremity from the eastern boundary of France to the Bay of Biscay. This rugged chain of mountains, some of whose peaks attain an elevation of almost ten thousand feet, throws out innumerable spurs to the north and south, which are separated by impassable gorges and gloomy ravines, occasionally relieved by valleys of limited extent but remarkable fertility. Its proximity to the ocean, whose vapors are condensed and precipitated by contact with the summit of the sierra, renders the climate of this region one of exceptional moisture, but its foggy atmosphere is not unfavorable either to the health or the longevity of man. In certain localities, rains are almost incessant, and the depths of many of its defiles are never gladdened by the genial and vivifying rays of the sun. The most untiring industry is requisite to procure the means of a meagre subsistence, and the laborious efforts of the cultivator of the soil are supplemented by the vigilance of the shepherd, whose fleeces, generally preferred to the coarse products of the loom, furnish the male population with clothing. Upon the coast entire communities obtain their livelihood by fishing; and the increased opportunities for intercourse with the world have produced noticeable modifications in the character of these people, who, while deficient in none of the manly qualities of the denizens of hill and fastness, seem less uncouth, and are possessed of a greater degree of intelligence than their brethren of the interior. The customs of these famous mountaineers, variously known as Basques, Asturians, Cantabrians, and Galicians, according to the respective localities they inhabit, have varied but little in the course of many centuries. They have ever been distinguished by simplicity of manners, sturdy honesty, unselfish hospitality, and a spirit of independence which has seldom failed to successfully assert itself against the most persistent attempts at conquest. A mysterious and unknown origin attaches to the Basques, whose strange tongue and weird traditions are supposed to connect them with the original inhabitants of the Peninsula, and who, in this isolated wilderness, have preserved the memory of one of the aboriginal races of Europe. The rugged districts lying to the westward of what is now called Biscay, the home of the Basques, were formerly inhabited by the Iberians, a branch of the Celts, which, by force of circumstances and through the necessities of self-preservation, has become fused with colonists from the southern provinces until its distinguishing features have disappeared. The well-known bravery of the defenders of this bleak and forbidding country, its poverty—which offers no allurements to either the avarice or the vanity of royal power—its ravines swept by piercing winds, and its mountains draped with perpetual clouds, long secured for it freedom from invasion. The Carthaginians never passed its borders. The Romans, under Augustus, succeeded, after infinite difficulties, in establishing over its territory a precarious authority, disputed at intervals by fierce and stubborn insurrections. It yielded a reluctant obedience to the Visigothic kings, whose notions of liberty, coarse tastes, barbaric customs, and frank demeanor were more congenial with the nature of the wild Iberian than the luxurious habits and crafty maxims of Punic and Latin civilization.

The most barren and inaccessible part of this secluded region at the time of the Moslem conquest was that embraced by the modern principality of the Asturias. A formidable barrier of lofty peaks, whose passes readily eluded the eye of the stranger, blocked the way of a hostile army. Within this wall a diversified landscape of mountain and valley presented itself, with an occasional village, whose huts, clustered upon a hill-side or straggling along some narrow ravine, indicated the presence of a settlement of shepherds or husbandmen. These dwellings, whose counterparts are to be seen to-day in the wildest districts of the Asturias and Galicia, were rude hovels constructed of stones and unhewn timbers, thatched with straw, floored with rushes, and provided with a hole in the roof to enable the smoke to escape. Their walls and ceilings were smeared with soot and grease, and every corner reeked with filth and swarmed with vermin. The owners of these habitations were, in appearance and intelligence, scarcely removed from the condition of savages. They dressed in sheepskins and the hides of wild beasts, which, unchanged, remained in one family for many generations. The salutary habit of ablution was never practised by them. Their garments were never cleansed, and were worn as long as their tattered fragments held together. Their food was composed of nutritious roots and herbs and of the products of the chase, a diet sometimes varied by vegetables, whose seeds had been imported from the south, and by a coarse bread made from the meal of chestnuts and acorns. Total ignorance of the courtesies and amenities of social life prevailed; privacy was unknown; and the peasant entered the hut of his neighbor without fear or ceremony. An independent political organization existed in each of these communities, whose isolated situation, extreme poverty, and primitive manners dispensed with the necessity for the complicated and expensive machinery of government. Old age, as among many nations in the infancy of their existence, was a title to authority and respect, and the elevation of an individual to a certain degree of power was not unusual when he had distinguished himself among his fellows for skill in hunting or valor in warfare. Christian missionaries had, centuries before, carried the precepts of the Gospel into the depths of this wilderness, and chapels and altars, where the idolatrous practices of Druidical superstition were strangely mingled with the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic ritual, attested the persistence of a faith which had existed for ages. Many of the personal habits and social customs of the Iberians, while well deserving the attention of the antiquary, were of such a nature as to preclude description. Under these manifold disadvantages were now to be laid the foundations of an empire destined to embrace the richest portions of two great continents; to extend its language, its ideas, its policy, its religion, its authority, to the extreme limits of a world as yet unknown; to humble the pride of the most renowned sovereigns of Europe; to perfect the most formidable engine for the suppression of free thought and individual liberty which the malignity of superstition has ever devised; to perform achievements and accomplish results unparalleled in the most fantastic creations of romance; and to devote to extermination entire races whose sole offence was that they had never heard of the God of their persecutors,—a people whose civilization was far inferior to their own.

The terror inspired by the approach of the Saracens, after the battle of the Guadalete, had driven great masses of fugitives to the north. Such of these as escaped the hardships of flight and the swords of their pursuers sought refuge in the most secret recesses of the Asturian mountains. They carried with them their portable property, their household gods, all the relics of the saints, all the sacred furniture of the altars, which they had been able to rescue from the sacrilegious grasp of the infidel. The refugees had forgotten alike, in the presence of universal misfortune, the long-cherished prejudices of race and the artificial distinctions of rank; and Goth, Roman, Iberian, and Basque, master and slave, mingled together upon a friendly equality. Received by the frank and hospitable mountaineers with a sympathy which was strengthened by the bond of a common religion, the unhappy fugitives became reconciled to the privations of a life which secured to them immunity from infidel oppression; and, by intimate association and intermarriage with their benefactors, formed in time a new nation, in which, however, mixture of blood and altered physical surroundings produced their inevitable effects, causing the traits of the Iberian to predominate, in a conspicuous degree, over those of the Latin and the Goth. As the rest of the Peninsula submitted to the domination of the Moors, the population of this province was largely augmented. Persecution, arising during the civil wars, still further increased immigration; deposed prelates, ruined artisans, and discontented slaves sought the companionship and aid of their fellow-sectaries; many, in apprehension of future evil, voluntarily abandoned their possessions; and the Asturias became the common refuge of all who had suffered as well as of all who were willing to renounce a life of comparative ease and dependence for the toils and privations which accompanied the enjoyment of political and religious liberty. With the advantages of freedom were also blended associations of a more sacred character. The greater number of the most celebrated shrines of a country remarkable for the virtues of its relics and the splendor of its temples had been desecrated by the invader. He had destroyed many churches. Others he had appropriated for the uses of his own religion. The piety of their ministers had, however, secreted, and borne away in safety, the most precious of those tokens of divine interposition whose efficacy had been established by the performance of countless miracles supported by the unquestionable testimony of the Fathers of the Church. Transported by reverent hands from every part of the kingdom, these consecrated objects were now collected in fastnesses impregnable to the enemies of Christ. Where, therefore, could the devout believer better hope for security and happiness than under the protection of holy souvenirs which had received the oblations and the prayers of successive generations of his ancestors? The wars and revolutions of more than a thousand years have not diminished the feeling of popular veneration attaching to these mementos of the martyrs, which, enshrined in quaint and costly reliquaries of crystal and gold, are still exhibited in the Cathedral of Oviedo.

Engrossed with the cares which necessarily attended the establishment of a new religion and the organization of a new government, the first viceroys of Spain took no notice of the embryotic state which was gradually forming in the northwestern corner of the Peninsula. Their scouting parties, which had penetrated to the borders of the Asturias, had long since acquainted them with the severity of the climate and the general sterility of the soil. No booty, save, perhaps, some sacred vessels and a few flocks of sheep, was there to tempt the avarice of the marauder. Domiciled in the genial regions of the South, whose natural advantages continually recalled the voluptuous countries of the Orient, the Moor instinctively shrank from contact with the piercing winds and blinding tempests of the mountains far more than from an encounter with the uncouth and warlike savages who defended this inhospitable land. Musa had already entered Galicia at the head of his troops when he was recalled to Damascus by the peremptory mandate of the Khalif; and foraging parties had, on different occasions, ravaged many of the settlements of the Basques; but as yet the Moslem banners had never waved along the narrow pathways leading into the Asturian solitudes, nor had the echoes of the Moorish atabal resounded from the stupendous walls which protected the surviving remnant of the Visigothic monarchy and the last hope of Christian faith and Iberian independence.

At an early period, whose exact date the uncertainty of the accounts transmitted to us renders it impossible to determine, the settlements of the coast fell into the hands of the Saracens, who fortified the town of Gijon, a place whose size might not improperly assert for it the claims of metropolitan importance. The government of this city was entrusted to one of the most distinguished officers who had served in the army of Tarik, the former Emir, Othman-Ibn-Abu-Nesa, who, as we have already seen, having contracted a treasonable alliance with the Duke of Aquitaine, had been pursued and put to death by the soldiers of Abd-al-Rahman immediately before the latter's invasion of France.

Their communications with the sea-coast having been thus interrupted, the Asturians, impatient of confinement, determined to secure an outlet by extending the limits of their territory upon the southern slopes of the mountains. The adventurous spirit of the mountaineers welcomed with ardor a proposal which must necessarily be attended with every circumstance of excitement and glory. Among the refugees who constituted the bulk of the population were many who had seen service in the Visigothic army, and some who were not unfamiliar with the tactics and military evolutions of the Saracens. One of the most eminent of these was Pelayus, a name associated with the most glorious traditions interwoven with the origin of the monarchy of Spain. The imagination of subsequent ecclesiastical chroniclers has exhausted itself in attempts to exalt the character and magnify the exploits of this hero. The Moorish authorities, however, while they afford but scanty details concerning him, are entitled to far more credit, as their material interests were not to be subserved by the fabrication of spurious miracles and preposterous legends. From the best accounts now attainable,—which, it must be confessed, are far from reliable,—it appears that Pelayus was of the mixed race of Goth and Latin. The Arabs invariably called him the " Roman," an appellation they were not in the habit of conferring upon such as were of the pure blood of the Visigoths. He was of noble birth, had held an important command in the army of Roderick, and was not less esteemed for bravery and experience than for hatred of the infidel, and for the reverent humility with which he regarded everything connected with the ceremonies and the ministers of the Church. To this chieftain, with the unanimous concurrence of both refugees and natives, was now entrusted the perilous and doubtful enterprise of openly defying the Saracen power. With the caution of a veteran, and an enthusiasm worthy of a champion of the Faith, Pelayus began to assemble his forces. The peasantry, ever alive to the attractions of a military expedition, and the fugitives, whose present distress recalled the more vividly their former prosperity, their pecuniary losses, and their personal bereavements, incident to the catastrophe which had befallen the nation, answered the call to arms with equal alacrity. The army which placed itself at the disposal of the new general did not probably number two thousand men. The majority were clad in skins. But few wore armor,—antiquated suits of mail which had rusted under the pacific rule of the successors of Wamba and had survived the disasters of Merida and the Guadalete. The Iberian javelin, the sling, and the short and heavy knife of the Cantabrian peasant composed their offensive weapons. Not one in ten had ever seen a battle. Not one in a hundred could understand or appreciate the necessity for the uncomplaining patience and implicit obedience indispensable to the soldier. Yet the soaring ambition, the patriotic pride, the belief in the special protection of heaven—feelings equal to the conquest of a world—rose high in the bosoms of these savage mountaineers. Their courage was unquestionable. Their native endurance, strengthened by simple food and habitual exposure to the tempests of a severe climate and the incessant exertions of a pastoral life, was far greater than that of their enemies. To invest the cause with a religious character, and to rouse to the highest pitch the fanaticism of the soldiery, a number of priests attended, with censer and crucifix and all the sacred emblems of ecclesiastical dignity. Of such materials was composed the army whose posterity was led to victory by such captains as Gonzalvo, Cortes, and Alva, and whose penniless and exiled commander was destined to be the progenitor of a long line of illustrious sovereigns.

The original realm of Pelayus afforded no indication of the enormous dimensions to which it was destined to expand. It embraced a territory five miles long by three miles wide. Its population could not have exceeded fifteen hundred souls. Its fighting men were not more than five hundred in number. The bulk of the army was composed of Basques and Galicians, attracted by the hope of spoil, held together for the moment only by the sense of common danger; impatient of restraint; scarcely recognizing the authority of popular assemblies of their own creation; valiant in action; brutal in victory; selfish and cowardly in defeat. They were without organization, officers, suitable arms, or commissariat. Of the art of war, as practised by even semi-barbarians, they knew nothing. Their military operations were controlled by the usual stratagems of savages, the nocturnal attack, the sudden surprise, the ambuscade.

The civil system of the infant monarchy was no further advanced. The exiled subjects of Roderick still retained, in some measure, the maxims and traditions of government. The people, among whom their lot was cast and who greatly outnumbered them, had, however, little knowledge of, and no reverence for, the Visigothic Code. The duchy of Cantabria, to which the latter mainly belonged, was never more than a nominal fief of the kingdom of Toledo. The fueros, or laws, by which they had been governed through successive foreign dominations of the Peninsula were of immemorial antiquity. Their long-preserved independence had nourished in their minds sentiments of arrogance and assumed superiority which were often carried to a ridiculous extreme. These influences had no small share in the subsequent formation of the Spanish constitution.

Thus, in a desolate and barren region; insignificant in numbers; destitute of resources; ignorant of the arts of civilization; without military system or civil polity; with neither court, hierarchy, nor capital; animated by the incentives of religious zeal and inherited love of freedom, a handful of barbarians laid the foundations of the renowned empire of Spain and the Indies.

The bustle which necessarily attended the warlike preparations of Pelayus was not long in attracting the attention of the government of Cordova. Information was conveyed to Anbasah-Ibn-Sohim, the representative of the Khalif, concerning the league that had been formed between the fugitive Goths and the denizens of the Asturias, as well as of the objects of the expedition which was organizing in the northern wilderness. The Emir, whose contempt for his enemies, added to a profound ignorance of the character of the country they inhabited, induced him to underestimate the difficulties to be encountered in their subjection, did not deem it worth his while to attack them in person. He naturally thought little was to be apprehended from the irregular hostilities of a few refugees who had retired with precipitation at the approach of the Moorish cavalry, united with a horde of vagabond shepherds and hunters unaccustomed to discipline and inexperienced in warfare. In his blind depreciation of the prowess of his adversaries, Anbasah-Ibn-Sohim left out of consideration many circumstances which influenced, in a marked degree, the subsequent fortunes of the Moslem domination in Spain. Their numerical inferiority was of trifling moment in a country thoroughly familiar to its inhabitants, but hitherto unexplored by the Saracens, and whose steep and tortuous pathways afforded such facilities for resisting an intruder that points might readily be selected where a score of men could, with little effort, successfully withstand a thousand. The Emir took no account of the mists which always enshrouding the sierra often entirely obscured the landscape; of the dense forests which might so effectually conceal the ambuscade; of the sudden and destructive rise of the mountain torrents; of the dangers attendant upon the landslide and the avalanche. Nor did he appreciate the feelings which must have been inspired by the desperate situation in which the Christians were placed. They were at bay in their last stronghold. Once driven from the shelter of their friendly mountains nothing remained for them but death or slavery. Their retreat into France was cut off by the Arab column now advancing into Septimania. Their brethren throughout the Peninsula had bowed before the sceptre of the Khalif, and no assistance could be expected from them. Their patriotic ardor was excited by the proud consciousness of independence and by apprehensions of the degradation of servitude; their pious frenzy was aroused by the destruction which menaced the religion of their fathers. In their camp were the sole memorials of a monarchy whose princes had dictated terms to the Mistress of the World. Around them on every side were sacred relics which had been visited from far and wide by pilgrims, whose miraculous power in the healing of disease it was sacrilege to doubt, and which had not only brought relief to the suffering but also comfort and salvation in the hour of death. God had made them the custodians of these treasures rescued from His desecrated altars; truly He would not abandon them in time of peril. By every artifice peculiar to their craft; by all the fervid appeals of eloquence; by every promise of present and prospective advantage; and by every threat of future retribution, the prelates inflamed the zeal of their fanatical hearers. They, more than any other class, understood the gravity of the situation. While not anticipating the power which the sacerdotal order was to attain over the temporal affairs of the Peninsula in coming centuries, they were not ignorant that the result of the impending conflict involved its supremacy or their own annihilation. Thus, at the very birth of the Spanish monarchy, appears predominant the ecclesiastical power which contributed more than all other causes to its eventual decay. Taking these facts into consideration, it is evident that the conquest of the Asturias would have required an ample force conducted by an experienced commander, whose talents, however respectable, could hardly have accomplished the task in a single campaign. But the Emir, who was on the point of invading France and did not deign to delay his expedition for the purpose of chastising a band of vagrant barbarians, detached a division, under an officer named Alkamah, to reduce the Asturias to subjection and exact the payment of tribute.

The Arab general, aside from the natural impediments which obstructed the march of an army through one of the most rugged localities of Europe, experienced but little trouble in his advance. The scattered collections of hovels which he encountered were deserted. No flocks were feeding on the hill-sides. All signs of cultivation were obliterated, and everything which could afford subsistence to an enemy had been removed or destroyed. The features of the entire landscape were those of a primeval waste. Through the defiles, without resistance, and almost without the sight of a human being except his own soldiers, Alkamah penetrated to the very heart of the Asturias, lured on by the wily mountaineers to a point where his superior numbers, so far from availing him, would be a positive disadvantage, and from whence retreat would be impossible.

Upon the eastern border of the wilderness, amidst a chaos of rocks, forests, ravines, and streamlets, rises the imposing peak of Auseba. The northern side of this mountain for a hundred feet from its base presents a steep and frowning precipice closing one end of a narrow valley, and whose almost perpendicular sides are only accessible to the trained and venturesome native. A cave, in whose depths three hundred men could readily be sheltered, exists in the face of the cliff, and through the gorge beneath run the troubled waters forming the source of the river Deva. A path, completely commanded by the heights upon either side, winds through the undergrowth and gives access to the cave and its environs, in former times the resort of benighted goatherds. In this spot, admirably adapted to purposes of defence, Pelayus determined to make his final stand. All non-combatants were secreted in the forest. Ambushes were posted along the only path by which an approach was practicable. In the cavern, whose name, Covadonga, is still revered by every Asturian noble and peasant, Pelayus concealed himself with a body of men selected for their courage and the superiority of their arms. Skirmishers now appeared in the front of the Moslem army, which, with a confidence born of former success, without hesitation followed its treacherous guides into the fatal valley. No sooner was the command of Alkamah within arrow-shot of the cave than the mountaineers sprang from their hiding-places. Wild cries of defiance and expectant triumph echoed from the rocky slopes of the ravine. From every hand the projectiles of the Christians poured down upon the heads of their astonished foes. When the ammunition of the bows and slings was exhausted, the sturdy peasants rolled down great stones and trunks of trees, which crushed a score of men at a single blow. Massed together, and thrown into confusion by the unexpected attack, the Saracens could not use their weapons to advantage. Their arrows rebounded harmlessly from the rocks.

The agility of their enemies and the character of the ground prevented a hand-to-hand engagement, which the inferior strength of the Christians naturally prompted them to avoid. Unable to endure the storm of missiles which was rapidly depleting their ranks, the Saracens attempted to retrace their steps. The first intimation of a desire to retreat was the signal for redoubled activity on the part of the Asturians. Pelayus and his band, issuing from the cave, fell upon the rear of the enemy. The detachments upon the flanks closed in, and the unfortunate Moslems, surrounded and almost helpless, resigned themselves to their fate. The battle became a massacre. To add to the discomfiture of the invaders, a fearful tempest, which, in a latitude whose air is always charged with moisture, often comes without warning, burst upon the valley. In a few moments the little brook had swollen into a roaring torrent. A section of the mountain-side, undermined and already tottering and crowded with terror-stricken Saracens, gave way, carrying with it hundreds of victims to be engulfed in the rushing waters. A trifling number of fugitives, aided by the darkness and the storm, succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the mountaineers, but the great majority of those composing the detachment, including all of its officers, perished. The estimated loss of the Moslems varies, according to the nationality of the annalist, from three thousand to one hundred and twenty-four thousand. In this, as in all other instances where the statements of the Arab and Christian writers of that age conflict, the preference should be given to the assertions of the former. The valley of Covadonga is so restricted in extent, especially where the battle took place, that it would with difficulty afford standing room for twenty thousand combatants. The vainglorious character of the northern Spaniard, who possesses not a little of the braggadocio of his cousin, the Gascon, has incited him to grossly magnify the importance of an exploit which requires no exaggeration; and his fabulous accounts have been recorded, with extravagant additions, by the ecclesiastical historians of the Dark Ages, with whom mendacity was the rule and accuracy the exception. Absolutely controlled by the prejudices of their profession, they studiously embellished every tale which could have a tendency to promote its interests and as carefully suppressed all hostile testimony. The monkish writers, whose credulity kept pace with their love of the marvellous, conceived that the glory of the Church was in a direct ratio to the number of infidels exterminated by her champions. To this motive are to be attributed the absurd statements concerning the losses of the enemy in every victory won by the Christian arms, a pernicious habit which was confirmed by the improbability of subsequent detection arising from the universal illiteracy of the age. The thorough unreliability of these old chroniclers in this and other particulars which might directly or indirectly affect the prestige of their order is calculated to cast suspicion over their entire narratives. When we add to these gross misrepresentations their meagre and confused accounts of the most important events, their profound ignorance of the hidden motives of human actions, their superstitious prejudices, and their incapacity of appreciating, or even of understanding, the principles of historical criticism, it may readily be perceived how arduous is the task of those who attempt to bring order out of this literary chaos. To the Arab writers, however, we can turn with a much greater degree of confidence. They make no attempts to disguise the magnitude of their reverses or to diminish the glory of their enemies. No contemporaneous account of the battle of Covadonga has descended to us. It was not for a century that its paramount importance became manifest. The attention of the clergy during that turbulent period was engrossed by the doubtful fortunes of the Church, and the exactions consequent upon the changes produced by a constant succession of rulers. The affairs of the entire Mohammedan empire were in a turmoil. In the East the chiefs of desperate factions were struggling for the throne of the khalifate. Africa was the scene of perpetual insurrection, provoked and maintained by the indomitable spirit of the Berbers. The Emirs of Spain, between the intervals of civil discord, were nursing extravagant dreams of ambition,—visions of the propagation of their faith, of the acquisition of new territories, of the subjugation of infidels, of the extension of empire. The glance of the viceroys was directed beyond the bleak Asturias towards the fertile plains of Southern France. The execution of the gigantic enterprise projected by the genius of Musa occupied their thoughts, and they were ignorant or careless of the aspirations of a handful of peasants, upon the issue of whose prowess and constancy were, even now, impending the existence of their dominion and the destinies of the Peninsula.

The meagre notices of the battle of Covadonga transmitted by Moorish chroniclers indicate that it was not considered a great disaster, and that its effects upon the posterity of both Christian and Moslem could not have been dreamed of. Yet from this eventful day practically dates the beginning of the overthrow of the Arab domination, not yet firmly established in its seat of power. Then was inaugurated the consolidation of mountain tribes, soon to be followed by the union of great provinces and kingdoms under the protection of the Spanish Crown. At that time was first thoroughly demonstrated the value of harmonious co-operation among factions long arrayed against each other in mutual hostility. Thence was derived the germ of freedom, which successfully asserted its rights under the frown of royalty, and, incorporated into the constitution of Aragon, long interposed a formidable obstacle to the encroachments of arbitrary and despotic sovereigns. During that epoch, by the fusion of races, were laid the foundations of that noble and sonorous idiom, unsurpassed in simplicity of construction, in conciseness and elegance of diction, in clear and harmonious resonance. Then was manifested for the first time the adventurous and daring spirit which carried the banners of Spain beyond the Mississippi, the Andes, and the Pacific. Then was instituted the scheme of ecclesiastical policy which, perfected by a succession of able and aspiring churchmen, placed the throne of Europe's greatest monarchy under the tutelage of the primacy of Toledo. Then originated that fierce and interminable contest—first for self-preservation, then for plunder, lastly for empire—which for a thousand years engrossed the attention of the world.

The renown acquired by Pelayus through the victory of Covadonga raised him at once from the position of general to the dignity of king. In his election the traditions of the ancient Gothic constitution were observed. The sentiments of freedom innate in the mountaineer of every land are reluctant to admit the superiority implied by the laws of hereditary descent or by the exercise of unlimited authority. The rude ceremonies by which regal prerogatives were conceded to this guerilla chieftain could not suggest to the wildest visionary the possibility of the gorgeous ceremonial of the Spanish court or of the absolute power exercised by Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second. It is not improbable that the commands of Pelayus were frequently disputed by his half-savage retainers. But it may well be doubted if among all the nations which composed the vast dominions of the House of

Austria could have been found an equal number of adherents more faithful in misfortune, more intrepid in danger, than those who formed the little band of the exiled hero. The immunity granted the Christians after their triumph would seem to rather imply contempt by the princes of Cordova than their discouragement or any apprehension of further misfortune. The moral effect of the victory, if imperceptible on the Arabs, produced at once most significant results in the regions bordering on the Asturias. The threatening attitude of the fishermen necessitated the evacuation of the coast, and Othman-Ibn-Abu-Nesa, Governor of Gijon, abandoned his charge, and, by a forced march, joined his countrymen beyond the mountains. The warlike spirit spread fast through Cantabria and Galicia, and was even felt upon the borders of what is now Leon and Castile; the Saracen colonists who had established themselves in the most fertile districts were exterminated; and the religious aspect of the struggle, which seemed to identify the cause of the insurgents with that of the Almighty, crowded the squalid hovels of the hospitable Asturians with thousands of fugitives who sought protection and liberty in the society of their friends and kinsmen.

Neither history nor tradition has ascribed to Pelayus any other military achievements than the famous one which signalized his accession to supreme power. In the retirement of his little kingdom, for the remainder of his days, he employed the security, for which he was indebted to the contempt of his enemies, in consolidating his authority; in the formation of a plan of government; in the erection of churches, shrines, and monasteries; and in encouraging among his subjects the pursuit of agriculture. His extreme devotion to the interests of the Church has obtained for his memory the grateful acknowledgment of the priesthood; while the little cross borne by him, in lieu of a standard, at Covadonga, and still preserved at Oviedo, is regarded with sentiments of peculiar reverence by the peasantry as a symbol whose miraculous powers were confirmed by the hand of God, and whose virtues were transmitted to the magnificent emblems of the Catholic hierarchy, which, the successors of the Roman eagles, sanctified in distant lands the explorations and the conquests of the Christian monarchs of the Peninsula.

The reign of Pelayus lasted thirteen years. Such were the benefits resulting from its munificence to the clergy and his justice to the people that, at his death, the sentiments of loyalty and gratitude overcame the traditions of centuries and the prejudice against hereditary descent, and Favila, his son, was permitted to succeed him by the tacitly admitted right of inheritance.

Little is known of the life of Favila excepting that it was passed in peace. Without aspirations to enlarge the circuit of his dominions, and destitute of all desire for military renown, he preferred the rude society of his companions and the excitements of the chase to the perilous and doubtful honors of warfare. Two years after his accession he was torn to pieces by a wild boar, whose fury he had rashly provoked under circumstances which admitted of no escape. He was buried by the side of his father in the church of Cangas de Onis, an insignificant hamlet not far from the battle-field of Covadonga, which was already dignified by the title of capital of the Asturias, and whose church was for many generations afterwards the pantheon of its princes.

Favila left no sons of sufficient age to assume the responsibilities of government, while the exigencies of the time demanded the services of a ruler possessed of talents and experience. The right of election was, as of old, once more asserted to the exclusion of the claims of primogeniture; and Alfonso I., son of the Duke of Cantabria and son-in-law of Pelayus, was, by common consent of the principal men of the infant nation, invested with the regal authority. The new king was a noted warrior, who had been the comrade-in-arms of Pelayus. His martial tastes and unflinching resolution were only surpassed by his zeal for the Christian faith, which acquired for him the appellation of " Catholic," so highly prized by his descendants, and which is still the most revered title of the head of the Spanish monarchy. The duchy of Cantabria, whose ancient limits had, however, been greatly curtailed by the encroachments of the Moors and the annexations of Pelayus, became, through the exaltation of its lord, an integral part of the Asturian kingdom.

The unquenchable fires of crusade and conquest burned fiercely in the breast of Alfonso. With all the impetuosity of his nature he announced his intention of waging ceaseless war against the infidel. The condition of the provinces subject to his jurisdiction had undergone radical changes since the election of Pelayus twenty years before. The population had enormously increased, partly from natural causes, but principally through immigration promoted by the love of liberty and by the destructive revolutions instigated by the vengeance or ambition of the conquerors. Villages, whose rude but comparatively comfortable dwellings replaced the filthy cabins of former times, occupied the picturesque valleys. Chapels and monasteries dotted the mountain-sides. Public affairs were administered according to a system, crude indeed, but framed upon the model of the Visigothic constitution, whose principles were not inconsistent with both the assertion of the prerogatives of royalty and the enjoyment, in large measure, of the blessings of individual freedom. The kingly authority was, in fact, as yet merely nominal. It had been conferred by the votes of the people, and was understood to be conditional upon the observance of the laws and the maintenance of order. The power of the Asturian sovereign was at this time not greater than that of many a petty feudal chieftain of Germany, and was far inferior to that possessed by the French Mayors of the Palace.

The occasion was propitious to the realization of the ambitious designs of Alfonso. The emirate was temporarily vacant through the absence of Okbah, its head, in Africa. Anarchy, with all its nameless horrors, prevailed in every portion of the Peninsula. The territory acquired in France, whose occupation had shed so much lustre on the Moslems and whose possession was designed as the preliminary step to the subjugation of Europe, had, through the valor of the Franks and the incapacity and jealousies of the emirs, with the solitary exception of the city of Narbonne, been wrested from the conqueror. The prestige of the heretofore invincible Saracens had been lost by repeated reverses, crowned by the terrible misfortune of Poitiers. In Galicia and the Basque provinces the peasantry had delivered the greater portion of their country from the enemy and were in full sympathy with the plans and aspirations of their Asturian neighbors, although they resolutely kept aloof from political union with them and declined to acknowledge the authority of their king. The operations of Alfonso were characterized by the activity and judgment of an experienced partisan. Passing suddenly into Galicia he surprised Lugo, which had remained in the hands of the Arabs since its capture by Musa, and soon afterwards occupied the strongly fortified city of Tuy, appropriating the territory north of the river Minho by the right of conquest. Thence he penetrated into Lusitania, taking some of the principal towns of that province and extending his march to the eastward until he had overrun all of the region lying to the north of the range of mountains now known as the Sierra Guadarrama.

The annalists who have mentioned the expeditions undertaken by Alfonso I. have neglected to regulate their order of occurrence, and attribute to the movements of the King a celerity which is almost incredible. In fact, these much-vaunted conquests were nothing more than mere forays. No permanent occupation of the country was possible. The uninterrupted succession of calamities which had descended upon it had transformed a region, never renowned for great productiveness, into a desert. In the few fertile spots where the industry of the Moor had obtained a foothold the fierce squadrons of Alfonso blackened the smiling landscape with the fires of destruction and carnage. Such towns and villages as lay in their path were destroyed; the Moors were condemned to slavery; and the Christians, despite their remonstrances, were compelled to follow in the train of the invader, to accept from him homes in the mountains, and to swear fidelity to the Crown. This policy of increasing the population of his dominions by compulsory immigration possessed at least the merit of originality, and was in the end eminently successful. The reluctant colonists, whose cities had been razed and whose lands had been devastated, were deprived of all incentives to return to a region that could no longer afford them subsistence. The ties of race and the precepts of religion already united them to those whom, despite the violence they had displayed, they could not consider as enemies. Distributed judiciously in the districts most deficient in inhabitants, whose soil, in many instances, was not more sterile than that which they had formerly tilled, the new subjects of Alfonso soon became reconciled to their altered condition of life. Their numbers greatly contributed to the strength of the growing kingdom. Their traditions, prejudices, and aspirations were identical with those of the Asturians. Complete amalgamation was soon accomplished by intermarriage and by the intimacies of commercial and social intercourse.

The operations of Alfonso are, for the most part, described with even more confusion of dates and localities than that which ordinarily characterizes the historical accounts of his age. Both the love of the marvellous and the bias of superstition have combined to magnify his achievements. Nevertheless, the account of no great victory breaks the monotony of an endless recital of murder, pillage, and conflagration. In the mountains, where every ravine favored an ambuscade, the Christians were invincible, but upon the plain, even when aided by the advantage of superior numbers, they were no match for the Moorish cavalry. The vulnerable condition of the country, which suffered from the inroads of the Asturian prince, impressed him with the necessity of erecting suitable defensive works along the borders of his own dominions. He therefore established a line of castles upon the southern slope of the sierra, dividing the present provinces of Old and New Castile, which were then known under the common designation of Bardulia, and from these fortified posts the two famous provinces have derived their modern name.

The reign of Alfonso does not seem to have known the blessings of tranquillity. His expeditions were incessant, and their results almost invariably successful. The Moors universally regarded him with a fear which, far more than the profuse adulation of his monkish biographers, confirms the prevailing idea of his prowess and indicates the respect in which he was held by his enemies, whose historians conferred upon him the honorable and significant appellation of Ibn-al-Saif, "The Son of the Sword." At the time of his death he had extended the limits of his kingdom until it embraced nearly a fourth part of the entire Peninsula, reaching from upper Aragon to the Atlantic, and from the Sierra Guadarrama to the Bay of Biscay. Far to the south of the territory which acknowledged his jurisdiction, a vast region had been swept by his inroads, and remained depopulated through the very terror of his name. While his resources did not enable him to retain possession of this neutral ground, its accessibility to attack rendered it useless to the Saracens. His death, in 756, was coincident with the accession to power of the renowned House of Ommeyah, whose genius held in check for half a century the patriotic impulses of the state which public disorder and universal contempt had permitted to form under the eye of the haughty emirs, an error of policy whose fatal consequences were not even suspected until the evil was beyond all remedy.

Thus, within a few years, from an affrighted band of homeless fugitives had arisen a nation whose power had already become formidable. In the independent spirit of its assemblies, convoked to elect a sovereign, were plainly discernible traces of that constitutional liberty which subsequently acquired such importance and produced such enduring political effects in the history of Spain. The basis of the new ecclesiastical system, on the other hand, consisted in a servile obedience to Rome, and was marked by none of the conscious dignity and self-reliance peculiar to the ancient Visigothic priesthood. A series of misfortunes had broken the pride of the Church; in the desecration of its relics, in the plunder of its altars, in the confiscation of its treasures, in the insults to its prelates, the multitude saw the fearful vengeance of an offended God. The wealth of the ecclesiastical order had disappeared, and with it much of its power. Its congregations were scattered. Whenever the poverty of the devout was so great that the regular tribute could not be raised all worship was proscribed. In those localities where the indulgence of the conqueror permitted the Christian rites, there was small inducement to proselytism, as no new churches could be erected, and the conversion of a Mohammedan was a capital crime, of which both tempter and apostate were equally guilty. In the face of the overwhelming catastrophe which had overtaken the Church, it is but natural that the eyes of its ministers should be turned towards the throne of the Holy Father, whose admonitions they had unheeded and whose commands they had defied. In a crowd of ignorant and superstitious peasants the prestige attaching to ancient ecclesiastical dignity and the reverence exacted by its sacred office soon raised the clergy to an unusual degree of prominence. It was their influence which actually founded the infant state; which dictated its policy; which directed its career; which profited by its success; which tendered sympathy in the hour of adversity; which shared its glory in the hour of triumph. And, as in the beginning it was predominant, so through the long course of ages its grasp never slackened, and to its suggestions, sometimes prompted by wisdom, but often darkened by bigotry, are to be attributed the measures emanating from both the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the dynasties of Spain.

The mingling of various nationalities in the Asturias produced its inevitable ethnical result, the evolution of a race superior to each of its constituents. But with physical improvement and mental culture came many deplorable evils, merciless hatred, superstitious credulity, military insubordination, and the vices of a society indulgent to the maxims and practice of a lax morality. The remorseless butchery of infidels was encouraged as highly meritorious, and only a proper return for the calamities produced by invasion. The ferocious soldiery, whose license during the continuance of hostilities was never restrained by their commanders, were, as might be expected, not amenable to discipline or obedient to the necessary regulations of their profession in time of peace. The orders of the King were sometimes openly disobeyed; and such was the precarious nature of his authority that he not infrequently considered it more expedient to dissemble than to punish. The licentious habits of the Visigothic prelates and nobles had been carried, along with the traditions of their ancient grandeur and the mementos of their former wealth, into the rude, but hitherto comparatively pure, society of the mountains. The severity of the climate, the incessant and violent exercise demanded by their avocations, and the uncertainty of subsistence had preserved the chastity of the Asturian peasantry, who, in many other respects, were remarkable for degradation and brutality. Polygamous unions, practised with more or less concealment by the privileged classes during the reign of Pelayus, upon the accession of Alfonso became open and notorious. The innumerable captives secured by marauding expeditions afforded excellent facilities for supplying or replenishing the harems of the nobles and the clergy. The holy fathers, like their predecessors under Witiza and Roderick, were noted for their taste and appreciation of the charms of female loveliness; and the owner of a beautiful slave whose price was too high for the count was rarely dismissed, for this cause, by the bishop. A well-appointed seraglio was an indispensable appendage to the household of every secular and ecclesiastical dignitary. The example of their ancestors, and the temptations offered by the fascinations of the beautiful Moorish captives, were too powerful to be withstood. To the allurements of passion was also added the gratification resulting from the consciousness of inflicted and well-deserved retribution. The fairest of the Gothic and Roman maidens had been torn from weeping parents to fill the harems of Cordova, Cairo, and Damascus. Alfonso I., whose title, The Catholic, has been confirmed by the profuse and fulsome eulogies of the Church, was behind none of his ghostly counsellors in his polygamous inclinations; and the offspring of a connection with an infidel concubine, who received the name of Mauregato, was destined to play an important part in the annals of the Reconquest. In every form and manifestation of social life the influence of the surviving elements of the Visigothic monarchy produced important and permanent results. To anarchy succeeded political organization, imperfect it is true, but the wisdom of whose principles was repeatedly confirmed by their adaptability to the requirements of an extensive empire. The physical condition of the people was improved, and their strength, hitherto employed against each other, was now directed to the injury of a common enemy. With new aspirations and altered manners were introduced changes in the Asturian dialect, which was originally derived from the Euskarian, the idiom of the Basques. The intercourse of the various classes of society grew more refined. Law gradually supplanted government by force. Religion again exerted its beneficent and powerful sway. The ceremonial of the Visigothic court—a mixture of barbarian insolence, Roman dignity, and Byzantine pomp—was revived, and a faint image of ancient greatness was exhibited by the pride and prowess of representatives of noble families who, mindful of former ascendency and confident of future distinction, gallantly rallied round the throne.

The spirit of hero-worship, as may readily be inferred from the superstitious credulity of the mountaineers, was strong in the Asturias. Every action of the early princes is distorted by the atmosphere of mystery and exaggeration which envelops it. The idea pervading classic mythology that those whom tradition declares to have been the benefactors of mankind, who have contributed to civilization the greatest practical benefits, and from whose efforts have been derived the true enjoyments of life, are entitled, if not to absolute apotheosis, at least to exaltation as demigods, perverted by sacerdotal influence, had been bequeathed, with other Pagan beliefs and practices, by the priests of Hercules and Æsculapius to the servants of the Pope. When canonization was deemed impolitic, the life of an eminent personage was embellished with a mass of fiction, of prodigy, of fable. Some historians have not mentioned the name of Pelayus; others, on account of the untrustworthy character of the authorities, have assigned all the exploits of his reign to the domain of the mythical. A miraculous appearance of the Virgin in the cave of Covadonga inspired the Christians with hope, and announced the coming victory. A choir of angels, whose voices were distinctly heard by the attendants, soothed the dying moments of Alfonso. Such legends, invented by priestly artifice and propagated by universal approbation in an age of ignorance, have no small influence in developing the character of a nation.

Thus, in a secluded corner of the Peninsula, neglected by their friends and despised by their enemies, the founders of an empire whose states and principalities were to be lighted by the rising as well as by the setting sun erected in obscurity and distress the humble fabric of their political fortunes. The almost hopeless prospect of the struggle at its inception nerved them to despair. Aided by the obstacles interposed by nature for their defence, encouraged by the suicidal conflicts which constantly harassed the emirate, and inspired with an unshaken confidence in the protection of heaven, an insignificant band of exiles, in the short space of a quarter of a century, insensibly expanded into a people whose existence, hitherto ignored, began, when too late, to arouse the serious apprehensions of the court of Cordova. The Asturian element, as jealous of liberty as the Basques but far less intolerant, infused into the public deliberations those principles of freedom subsequently so prominent in the laws of the northern provinces; and even now, after centuries of despotism, not entirely eradicated from the Spanish constitution. It is one of the strangest of political phenomena that from such a source should have proceeded institutions that made the Inquisition possible. The imperceptible but lasting influence of the Asturians did not pass away with the prestige of the great princes of the Houses of Austria and Bourbon. The religion of the national hierarchy, organized within its borders and promulgated by its armies, still affords consolation to the devout of many lands, and the musical language, formed by a fusion of barbarous dialects, is the idiom of one-sixth of the geographical area of the habitable globe.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OMMEYADES; REIGN OF ABD-AL-RAHMAN I.

756–788

The Ommeyade Family—Its Origin—Its Hostility to Mohammed—The Syrian Princes—Their Profligacy—Splendors of Damascus—Luxury of the Syrian Capital—Rise of the Abbasides—Proscription of the Defeated Faction—Escape of Abd-al-Rahman—His Romantic Career—He enters Spain—His Success—Defeat and Dethronement of Yusuf—Constant Insurrections—Enterprise of the Khalif of Bagdad—Its Disastrous Termination—Invasion of Charlemagne—Slaughter of Roncesvalles—Death of Abd-al-Rahman—His Character—His Services to Civilization—Foundation of the Great Mosque — The Franks reconquer Septimania.

I NOW turn to that splendid period wherein was displayed the glory of the line of the Ommeyades, an epoch forever memorable for its achievements in science and practical philosophy; forever illustrious in the history of intellectual progress as well as for the development of those useful arts which diminish the toil and increase the happiness of every individual, irrespective of rank, whose influence and avocations insensibly contribute their share to the amelioration or degradation of humanity.

Prominent among the nobles of Mecca, equal in pride of lineage and superior in real power to the Hashemites, to which tribe the Prophet belonged, was the family of the Ommeyades. Although not exempt from a well-grounded suspicion of atheism, they were, from motives of policy, devoted champions of the worship of the Kaaba. Their idolatrous predilections were disclosed by the significant names of their chieftains, and especially by that of their founder, Abd-al-Shams, "The Slave of the Sun." While the sheiks of the Hashemites, the hereditary guardians of the Kaaba, enjoyed the nominal authority of heads of the Koreish, the military talents and intellectual endowments of the Ommeyades secured for their chiefs the command of the army, an advantage by no means counterbalanced by the spiritual influence possessed by their rivals over the worldly and skeptical population of Mecca. The commerce of the Holy City, which reaped such substantial benefits from its position as the centre of Arabian superstition, was largely in the hands of the Ommeyades. The great caravans, which, at regular periods, carried on a lucrative traffic with Egypt and Syria, were placed under the charge of their most distinguished leaders. The riches amassed by the principal members of the family were prodigious, and their insolence and cruelty were, in nearly every instance, in a direct ratio to their wealth and power. Quick to perceive that their political influence as well as their pecuniary interests would be seriously imperilled by the spread of Islam, the Ommeyades early displayed the most unrelenting hostility towards their countryman Mohammed. They reviled his doctrines. They scoffed at his pretensions to divine inspiration. His proselytes were followed by the taunts and insults of the mob of Mecca, instigated by the dissolute young nobles of the Koreish aristocracy. Long before he had secured a respectable following, the Prophet, on several occasions, narrowly escaped the violence of his insidious enemies; and the Hegira itself, the era from which the magnificent dynasties of Syria and Spain were to date the acts of their sovereigns, was necessitated by the discovery of a murderous plot against him hatched and matured by the chiefs of the Ommeyades.

In the defeat of Ohod, where the Prophet was wounded and nearly lost his life; at the siege of Medina, which menaced with destruction the existence of the new religion, the hostile armies were commanded by Abu-Sofian, the principal sheik of this powerful family. His wife, the termagant Hind, prompted by the impulses of a savage and a cannibal, had torn out and partly devoured the liver of Hamza, Mohammed's uncle, and had worn a necklace and bracelets of the ears of Moslems who had fallen bravely in battle. After the surrender of Mecca, Abu-Sofian and his partisans were induced to show a pretended conformity with the observances of the detested faith, but only under the threat of instant death.

The Syrian princes, despite their services to literature and art, were, almost without exception, profligates and infidels. Ever famous for voluptuousness and frivolity, they had inherited and improved upon the seductive dissipations of the Roman Empire. In the ingenious invention and development of depraved tastes and acts of unspeakable infamy, Antioch and Damascus stood unrivalled. The use of wine, prohibited by the Koran, was universal; the debauchery of the court, which rivalled that of the worst period of imperial degradation, excited the wonder and disgust of foreigners. The ministers of the most revolting vices, unmolested, defiled with their presence alike the halls of the palace and the precincts of the mosque. The drunkenness of the Khalif not infrequently required the constant attendance of slaves, even in the audience chamber. Vast sums were lavished upon singing and dancing boys painted and attired like women, an abomination in the eyes of every conscientious Mussulman. Female musicians and performers, whose attractions often obtained over the susceptible monarch a dangerous and permanent ascendency, were imported at great expense from Mecca, the focus of the religion and the vice of

Asia. A spirit of boundless extravagance was cultivated as a necessary attribute of regal splendor, and a timely jest or a ribald song often procured for an unworthy favorite a reward equal to the revenue of a province.

Damascus, under the rule of the Ommeyades, presented a picture of licentiousness and luxury unequalled, before or since, by that or any other community of the Moslem world. The importance of its commerce, the opulence of its citizens, the beauty of its suburbs, the sanctity of its traditions, and the prestige of its name gained for the most venerable city of antiquity the admiration and the reverence of every traveller. Its temples were embellished with all the magnificent creations of Oriental art. Its palaces were encrusted with porphyry, verde-antique, lapis lazuli, and alabaster. Through its gardens, over whose mosaic walks waved in stately majesty the palm, and where the air was perfumed with the fragrance of a thousand flowers and aromatic shrubs, flowed rivulets of the purest water. In every courtyard were fountains, and in the harems of the wealthy they were often fed with costly wines. The most gaudy attire was affected even by the populace, and no material but silk was considered worthy of the dignity of a Syrian noble. In the shops of the bazaar, divided as are those of the East to-day into sections appropriated to different wares, were to be found objects of commerce of every country from Hindustan to Britain. The various nationalities which composed the population of the city were each distinguished by a peculiar costume, and the brilliant and picturesque aspect of the living streams which poured unceasingly through the streets was enhanced by the multitudes of visitors whom business or curiosity had attracted to the capital of the khalifate.

With the occupation of the city by the Moslems, its physical aspect, the character of its population, and the nature of its political institutions had changed with its religion. From Græco-Syrian, affected to some extent by Persian influence, it became thoroughly Arab. The apparently ineradicable ideas of personal liberty entertained by the Bedouin, inconsistent even with the salutary restraints necessary for the maintenance of government and the preservation of society, were carried from the boundless Desert into the circumscribed area of the Syrian metropolis. Every tribe had its own municipal district or ward, separated from the others by walls fortified by towers, and closed at sunset by massive gates. So perfect was this isolation that each quarter exhibited the picture of a miniature town, independent of the others, with its markets, caravansaries, mosques, and cemeteries. The rule of separation was carried still farther in these communities by assigning different wards to Jews and Christians, a practice still to be observed in the cities of the Orient. Unobstructed communication with the surrounding country was obtained by means of gateways in the principal wall, of which each quarter always possessed one and sometimes more. This singular arrangement, a constant protest against the centralized despotism which, despite its professions, is the governing principle of Islam, greatly facilitated the political disturbances and insurrections whose prevalence is so marked a feature in the history of Damascus.

The Great Mosque, inferior in sanctity only to the temples of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, stood in the very centre of the city. The plan and decorations of the structure were Byzantine, and still bear no inconsiderable resemblance to those of the Cathedral of St. Mark at Venice. In such profusion were mosaics lavished upon its walls that even the exterior blazed with the intolerable brilliancy of this elegant ornamentation. Its imposing dome and slender minarets, rising above a maze of houses and gardens, were the first objects which met the expectant glance of the camel-driver as he urged his weary beast over the drifting sands of the Desert. At the fountain of its spacious court the pilgrim from Yemen and the merchant from Irac, side by side, performed the lustrations enjoined upon the true believer. Before its gorgeous Kiblah the curious of every clime, the devout of every rank, the prince and the beggar, the noble and the dervish, the master and the slave, in fraternal concord implored the protection and the blessing of God.

The splendors of the Orient were reflected by the court and the palace of the khalifate. The quarries of Europe, Africa, and Asia were ransacked for the rarest marbles. Temples of Pagan deities were stripped of frieze and capital carved by the hands of famous sculptors of antiquity. Byzantine mosaics glittered upon the floors and walls with a sheen that resembled folds of satin drapery and cloth of gold. The tapestries of Persia, whose designs ignored the injunction of the Koran prohibiting the representation of forms of animal life, were suspended, in gorgeous magnificence, from portals of verde-antique and arcades of Numidian marble and polished jasper. The gilded ceilings were of odoriferous woods curiously inlaid in bewildering arabesques with ivory, mother-of-pearl, ebony, and tortoise-shell. The profusion of water recalled the partiality of the Arab for the precious fluid associated with the toilsome march of the caravan, with the repose of the camp, with the refreshing coolness of the verdant oasis, with the triumph of the foray, with many a happy memory and sacred tradition of the Desert. In every courtyard sparkled jets of spray drawn from the sources of the famous rivers Abana and Pharpar. Channels cut in the marble floors conducted the overflow through the summer apartments of the palace into the little canals which traversed, in every direction, the fragrant gardens. The baths, designed to subserve the threefold purpose of religion, health, and pleasure, were fitted up with almost incredible luxury. Upon their walls the artists of Constantinople had exhausted their utmost ingenuity and skill. The basins were of porphyry and alabaster; the silver pipes were finished with the heads of animals carved in solid gold. The air that came from the furnace through the hypocaust was laden with the sweetness of a hundred intoxicating odors. The divans upon which the bathers reclined were covered with damask, embroidered with many colored silk in a maze of graceful and capricious patterns. Through windows of stained glass, high up in the vaulted ceiling, the brilliant rays of a Syrian sun fell, tempered and refracted in iridescent hues upon the scene of luxurious repose and sensuality below.

With the terrible retribution that followed the death of Othman, the tribal supremacy—and with it the control of the Moslem government—was transferred to the heads of the Meccan aristocracy of the clan of Abu-Sofian. The sincerity of their professions had long been doubted. The unwise appointments of Othman, a member of that family, was the principal cause of the popular discontent that culminated in his assassination. Weak and vacillating, his movements were directed by his uncle Hakem, who had betrayed the confidence of Mohammed, and had been ignominiously driven from the Hedjaz. Another Ommeyade, the father of Walid, Governor of Kufa, spat in the face of the Prophet, and had been executed as a felon; while the sacrilegious conduct of his worthy son had provoked a dangerous riot in the very mosque of his capital. Still another, Abdallah-Ibn-Sad, Governor of Egypt, raised to the coveted dignity of secretary of Mohammed, had perverted the texts of the Koran, and had fled and apostatized, thereby incurring the penalty of death. Under Muavia, the first Syrian Khalif, the outward ceremonies of religion were practised and the precepts of the Koran obeyed with apparent fidelity. But this conformity, palpably insincere, was largely the effect of policy. The orthodoxy of a people whose ancestors were for centuries the ministers of idolatrous worship, who resisted with every resource of contumely and violence the apostle of a new religion in his weakness, and assented reluctantly to his dogmas in his power, and whose political importance was directly dependent upon the maintenance of that religion, may, with propriety, be questioned. The Pagan traditions of his ancestors were predominant in the breast of Muavia. A decent reverence for the Koran, an apparent assent to its tenets, together with a politic and strict performance of the ceremonies of its ritual, concealed from his subjects all of the skepticism of his family, all of the abject superstition of his race. His palace swarmed with soothsayers and charlatans. Before engaging in any important undertaking, in the presence of public calamity, under the weight of domestic misfortune, he appealed for counsel to the arts of divination, denounced by Mohammed as a relic of idolatry and offensive to God. In his adherence to these heathen rites he was encouraged by the influence and example of his favorite consort, the mother of Yezid, a Bedouin of the tribe of the Beni-Kalb, who, amidst the luxurious pomp of the Syrian court, still pined for the coarse fare and untrammelled freedom of the Desert.

The Ommeyade Khalifs grudged no treasure and spared no toil in the adornment of their capital, the centre of their religion, the seat of their empire. To their political sagacity are to be attributed the massive fortifications which preserved the city from the encroachments of Persia and the plots of daring aspirants to imperial power. Their paternal beneficence was manifested by aqueducts and countless subterranean conduits which conveyed an unfailing supply of water into even the humblest dwellings of the poor. Their enlightened generosity relieved the suffering, encouraged the learned, promoted commerce, repressed fanaticism, dispelled the mists of ignorance. The white banner of their dynasty floated in triumph over the mosque of Medina, the towers of Bassora, the walls of Kairoan, the citadel of Toledo. In scientific acumen and literary renown the reputation of the court of Damascus was far inferior to that subsequently attained by the Khalifate of Bagdad. The genius of the Syrian seemed less adapted to the slow and plodding researches of the laboratory than to the noisy wrangles of theological controversy. But in the material enjoyments of life, in the pomp which invested the dignity of sovereign, in the riotous exhibition of sensual extravagance, Damascus was supreme. On occasions of ceremony the attire of the Khalif was of gold brocade, and only when he exercised the religious functions of his holy office incumbent on him as the head of Islam did he condescend to don the plain white vestments of his order. The menials of his household, even to the cooks, when they appeared before the Divan, were clad in damask. The devotees of pleasure were the favorite companions of the Successor of the Prophet. His days were passed at cock-fights and horse-races. The number of coursers which contended in these trials of speed was immense, sometimes amounting to the incredible figure of one thousand. His nights were amused by the tales of story-tellers, by the improvisations of poets, by the antics of buffoons, by the lascivious contortions of professional dancers. The barbaric orgies of the Bedouin tents were transferred to the palace of the khalifate, and supplemented with the polished vices of Egypt and the nameless iniquities of Rome and Constantinople. In the depth and frequency of his potations, the royal expounder of the Koran might well challenge the admiration of the seasoned revellers of Scandinavia. His drinking-horns were of enormous size. The wine used in the banquets was of the choice vintage of Tayif, a town in the vicinity of Mecca. Potent of itself, the effect of its draughts was heightened by the addition of musk and other aphrodisiacs. When the surfeited stomach could endure no more, emetics were employed to prolong the debauch and obviate its unpleasant consequences.

What a contrast does all this splendor and profligacy present to the frugal habits, patriarchal simplicity, and homely virtues of the early khalifs! What a change from the humble domestic offices performed by the Arabian Prophet, who often himself prepared his frugal meal and mended his tattered sandals! How different from the dignified reserve and earnest piety of Abu-Bekr; how strange when compared with the stoical demeanor and abstemious life of Omar, who entered Jerusalem at the head of his victorious army in a garb inferior to that of the meanest soldier, and whom an ambassador of the King of Persia found asleep, surrounded by beggars, upon the steps of the Great Mosque of Medina! And yet a century had not elapsed from the Hegira to the period when the Ommeyades of Syria reached the meridian of their greatness and their power.

The liberty enjoyed by women at this period was much greater than that subsequently conceded them by Mohammedan law. The lax manners of the Desert had not yet been completely subjected to the restrictions demanded by new social conditions. During the reigns of the first khalifs, the barbarous practice which countenanced the traffic in and service of eunuchs was unknown. Later, however, the close intercourse with the Byzantine and Persian courts suggested and encouraged the custom. But it would seem from accounts transmitted by the writers of the time that the institution of these guardians produced no marked effect upon the prevailing immorality; and the fidelity of even the modern eunuch is, as every adventurous Oriental traveller knows, far from incorruptible. Princes visited clandestinely the harems of their subjects, and celebrated in licentious verse, without concealment of name or opportunity, the charms of their mistresses. Ladies of the royal household intrigued openly with the poets and singers of the court. With such examples before them, the inferior orders of the people could hardly be expected to preserve even the appearance of virtue. As a matter of fact, in no country was society more corrupt, and the name of Syrian was everywhere a synonym of effeminacy, infidelity, and vice.

But the excesses of the Khalifs of Damascus, scandalous as they were, became trifling faults in the eyes of the pious Moslem when he considered the horrible acts of sacrilege of which these sovereigns were guilty. The generals of Yezid, after the battle of Harra which avenged the murder of Othman and decided the fate of Arabia, delivered up the city of Medina to pillage. A massacre, so cruel as to provoke the indignation of an age accustomed to scenes of butchery and violence, was perpetrated by the infuriated soldiery. A thousand infants were born of the outrages of that fatal day to be branded for life with the epithet of the "Children of Harra." The troopers of the Syrian army, encumbered with their horses, fastened them amidst gibes and curses in the mosque; the mosque founded by Mohammed upon the spot of propitious augury, where his favorite camel had halted at the termination of the flight from Mecca. There, tethered between the pulpit, whence the texts of the Koran had fallen from the lips of the Prophet upon the attentive ears of multitudes of believers, and the tomb where his remains had been reverently laid by the hands of his companions, the restless horses defiled the place holiest on earth to the Mussulman save the Kaaba alone. The survivors of Bedr, whom the favor of Mohammed and the veneration of the populace had exalted to the rank of an ecclesiastical nobility, perished to a man. At the siege of Mecca, which soon followed, the privileges that, from time immemorial, had protected the sacred territory from insult were violated, and the mosque, set on fire by order of the commander of the army, was, with the Kaaba, entirely consumed.

Under the administration of the succeeding khalifs of the House of Ommeyah, the mad freaks of these unworthy chiefs of Islam attained the climax of extravagance and sacrilege. Exhausted by debauchery and careless of public opinion, they sent their boon companions and their concubines, muffled in the royal robes, to repeat the morning prayer from the pulpit of the mosque. They degraded their sacred office by the assumption of mean disguises, the better to penetrate the interior of the houses of their neighbors, inviolable in the sight of every sincere Mussulman. They maintained and publicly caressed animals whose contact the law of Islam declared unclean. Their lives were sullied with incests and every physical abomination. The reverent Moslem will not tread upon a piece of paper, for fear it may be inscribed with a sentence from the Koran; but so little regard did the scoffing Ommeyade princes entertain for its sacred texts that they used it as a target for their arrows. Each was noted for his predilection for some favorite vice. Al-Walid I. was seldom sober, and suffered no day to pass without a drunken orgy. Yezid II. starved himself on account of the death of a female slave. The conduct of Al-Walid II. was a strange compound of the tricks of a buffoon and the vagaries of a lunatic. In absolute defiance of the prejudices of his fellow-Mussulmans, he insisted that his dogs should accompany his retinue on the Pilgrimage to Mecca. Although, by virtue of his office, the leader of the great Pilgrim caravan, who was expected to afford an edifying example of piety to his followers and direct the customary devotional exercises, so little did he appreciate the duties of the occasion that he delegated his spiritual authority to one of his friends, and was with difficulty dissuaded from erecting a tent on the very summit of the Kaaba, wherein he might the more publicly outrage the feelings of the inhabitants of the Holy City by scenes of drunkenness and riot. A pet monkey, which had been christened Abu-Kais, was an inseparable companion of his revels. He quaffed the strong wine of Tayif from the same cup as his royal master, and with him shared alike the pleasures of intoxication and the depression consequent upon prolonged indulgence. The Khalif presented his strange associate to grave ambassadors as a venerable and learned Jew whom the justice of the Almighty had overtaken, and who, under the spell of enchantment, was now expiating, in the form of an unclean animal, a life of hypocrisy and sin. When the Khalif rode abroad, Abu-Kais accompanied him, clad in silk, and mounted on a donkey magnificently caparisoned. But it happened one day that Abu-Kais, having imbibed too freely of his master's liquor, was thrown from his steed and broke his neck. The grief of Al-Walid for the loss of the monkey was for weeks the jest of the capital. Abu-Kais was, to the great scandal of the faithful, honored with the rites of Moslem burial, and the Khalif, whose poetic talent was far above mediocrity, composed some plaintive verses as a well-merited tribute to his conviviality and wisdom.

I have dwelt at some length upon the description of Damascus because of the close and significant resemblance of the political, social, religious, and military institutions of Syria to those of Mohammedan Spain. In the population of the latter country the Syrian element greatly preponderated in influence, if not in numbers. The first Khalif of Andaluz was the last scion of the race of the Ommeyades. The feuds, the prejudices, the traditions, of both nations were identical. The Syrian exile ever retained in affectionate remembrance the scenes and events of his childhood. His armies were marshalled in the same order as were those which went forth to victory under the white banner of Muavia and Al-Walid. His cities were laid out in imitation of the irregular lines and labyrinthine streets of the Syrian capital. His palaces were constructed by architects familiar with the splendid edifices which were the crowning ornament of the Eastern Khalifate. The mosaics that sparkled around the Kiblah of the Great Temple of the West were the handiwork of the same school of Byzantine artists whose creations had adorned the stately dome which rose over the site of the ancient Church of St. John the Baptist. The Koran, whose leaves dyed with the life-blood of Othman were long exhibited with the garments of the martyred Khalif in the Djalma of Damascus, was for more than two centuries the object of a veneration approaching to idolatry, rendered by countless myriads of worshippers, attracted from every quarter of the globe by the marvels and the sanctity of the Mosque of Cordova.

The gross and offensive ridicule of everything connected with religion and with a life passed in strict accordance with the principles of moral rectitude, so popular at the court of Damascus, would have been considered impolitic and ill-bred by the polished society whose cities lined the shores of the Tagus and the Guadalquivir. But education and skepticism were almost equally diffused throughout the Peninsula, and there was, in fact, but little difference in the opinions concerning the divine origin and authenticity of the Koran entertained by the Moslem of Syria and the Moslem of Spain. Nor was the influence of the occult sciences less prominent in the West than in the East. Superior intelligence, which brought emancipation from many of the vices of superstition, did not seem to perceptibly diminish the confidence inspired by the mummeries and impostures of the wizard and the astrologer.

The Spanish Arabs, following the example of their Syrian brethren, raised woman to a position equally removed from the one she so ignominiously occupied in earlier and in later times, as the giddy toy of man or the abject slave of religious credulity. The voice of the princesses of Syria not infrequently decided the policy of the Divan. The ladies of Cordova were the chosen advisers of the monarch; the friends of philosophers; the learned associates of great physicians, astronomers, generals, and diplomatists. Free from the excessive prodigality, the defiant blasphemy, the extravagant follies of the Syrian dynasty, the sovereigns of the Western Khalifate suffered no opportunity to escape which would, even indirectly, secure for their subjects the substantial benefits of commerce, the manifold advantages of science, the pleasures of art, the consolations of literature; while they at the same time, actuated by a lofty ambition not confined by the limits of their own dominions, fostered those noble aspirations and incentives to progress which promote the generous emulation of nations.

A society whose religious teachers are atheists and hypocrites, the contempt of whose rulers is constantly manifested towards a faith to which they are solely indebted for their authority and whose wickedness has become proverbial, can hardly survive the first resolute attempt at its overthrow. And so it happened with the Ommeyades at Damascus. Not only in Syria, but to the uttermost bounds of the khalifate, the stories of the vices and skepticism of the Commander of the Faithful were heard with disgust and horror. The law-abiding were scandalized by the orgies of the court. The descendants of those who had perished at Harra and Mecca, the remnant of the recalcitrant non-conformists of Persia, the seditious populace which had felt the iron hand of the governors of Irac, were inflamed with the desire and the hope of vengeance. The devout Mussulman, who conscientiously observed the injunctions of the Koran and to whom the traditions of Islam were sacred as connected with the life and sayings of the Prophet, was shocked at the blasphemy which the Successor of Mohammed did not hesitate to utter, even within the precincts of the mosque and before the very altar of God. From time to time the popular indignation was displayed in insurrections, which, being spontaneous and deficient in organization and leadership, were crushed without difficulty. But under the reign of Merwan II., the fourteenth khalif of the dynasty, a formidable rebellion broke out in Persia. The descendants of Abbas, the uncle of Mohammed and the grandfather of Ali, openly laid claim to the throne of the Orient. Their party was supported by Abu-Muslim, the greatest military commander of the age. Attached for generations to the memory of Ali, the Persians flocked by thousands to the camp of the insurgents, and the pretender, Abul-Abbas, having established his authority over the eastern provinces, moved westward to the conquest of Syria. Aware, when too late, of the magnitude of the impending danger, which at first had been despised, the Khalif brought into requisition the entire resources of his empire to repel the invasion. In the plains of the Zab, a tributary of the Tigris, and not far from the site of ancient Nineveh, the two armies met in a conflict upon whose result were staked the destinies of the two great factions of Islam. The valor of the Abbasides, aided by the treason which pervaded the ranks of the enemy, prevailed; the forces of Merwan were routed; and the foundations of a new empire were laid which was destined to eclipse, by the glories of Bagdad, the dazzling and meretricious splendor of the court of Damascus. And now a frightful proscription was inaugurated. Even the schismatics, whose lukewarm support had incurred the suspicions of the Ommeyades, were unable to escape the sword of the conqueror. It soon became evident that the fury of the Abbasides would be satisfied only with the absolute extermination of the hostile faction. The deposed Khalif, Merwan, who had fled to Egypt, was defeated in a skirmish and killed. Every member of his house whose rank was sufficiently exalted to inspire the usurper with apprehensions was ruthlessly murdered. Where open violence did not avail, the basest treachery was employed. Abdallah, the uncle of Abul-Abbas, by affording some of the exiles assistance, had succeeded in gaining the confidence of the proscribed faction. He solemnly promised an asylum to all who would resort to Damascus and invoke his protection. Deluded by his professions, many left their hiding-places, where they had been in comparative security, to expose themselves to the designs of a perfidious enemy. When all had arrived who could be induced to confide in him, Abdallah gave a banquet in honor of his distinguished protegés, which more than seventy of the Ommeyades attended. In the midst of the festivities, at a given signal, a band of soldiers burst in upon the assembly, and the unhappy guests were massacred. Rugs and curtains were thrown over their prostrate bodies; the revelry was renewed; and the partisans of the Abbasides toasted the monster whose ferocious cunning had cut off his most dangerous adversaries by the sacrifice of the rites of hospitality. Within the tent of the Bedouin the life of his most deadly enemy is sacred. But to the Arab of Syria or Persia no promise was binding, no engagement was inviolable, where his interests or his ambition were concerned. Thus had the fatal influence of Roman and Byzantine manners vitiated the nature of a people whose sense of manly dignity and personal honor had for ages been conspicuous amidst the wide-spread depravity of Asia.

Every member of the detested race whom the bloodthirsty diligence of their foes could discover was hunted like a wild beast and put to death. Children were butchered in the presence of their parents. Women who refused to disclose the hiding-places of their kindred, or the whereabouts of their jewels, were stabbed without ceremony. Abu-Ibn-Muavia, one of the noblest cavaliers of Damascus, was deprived of a hand and foot, and paraded through the cities of Syria upon an ass until pain and exhaustion relieved him of his misery. The ferocious Abbasides were not content with outrages upon the living; they even violated the tombs of the khalifs and scattered to the winds the remains of those princes whose glory and whose crimes had adorned or defiled the throne of the East.

Amidst the universal ruin of his family, one prince alone of the Ommeyades, Abd-al-Rahman-Ibn-Muavia, had survived. Of rare promise and endowed with many virtues, he had long been the ornament of the court of Syria. He had received the best education obtainable in the schools of the capital. His mind had been enlarged by travel. The fortuitous advantages of wealth and royal lineage added but little to the prestige attaching to his name. The conversation of learned men, daily attendance upon the proceedings of the Divan, intimate association with the highest dignitaries of the state, all had aided to familiarize him with the complex machinery of government. The turbulence of the times necessarily enlisted the military services of the various members of the royal house, and Abd-al-Rahman was not deficient in the knowledge of those duties required by the stirring life of the camp and the battle-field. In proficiency in manly exercises, in the daring adventures of the chase, in skill in the use of arms, he surpassed all competitors.

An accidental and timely absence from the court had preserved the young prince from the fate of his kindred. As soon as intelligence of the massacre reached him, he fled to an estate which he possessed near the Euphrates, and there he was soon joined by his household. But the horsemen of Abul-Abbas, whose implacable cruelty had acquired for him the appropriate title of Al-Saffah, The Sanguinary, were already upon his track; his villa was surrounded, and by swimming the river he barely escaped with his life. By dint of perseverance and courage, after many perils, he succeeded in reaching Palestine, where he was found by Bedr, a freedman of his father, who brought him his sister's jewels, generously donated to relieve his necessities. From Palestine he passed in disguise into Africa, a province which had not yet renounced allegiance to the Ommeyades, and whose governor had been one of the most ardent supporters of the proscribed faction. Here he was hospitably welcomed, and at once found himself surrounded by friends and refugees who had eluded the vigilance of the Abbasides. The spirits of the exile rose with the present assurance of security in the companionship of adherents whose sympathies were aroused, and whose passions were excited by the story of his wrongs. Years before, the downfall of the race of Ommeyah had been foretold by an astrologer, who had, at the same time, predicted the future greatness of the illustrious fugitive. The intellect of Abd-al-Rahman, though strong, was not proof against the oracles of superstition which flattered his vanity while they inspired him with awe, and he had listened, with all the credulity of an Oriental, to the mysterious hints of the charlatan. The first portion of the prediction had been verified. With the single exception of himself, the princes of his house had been exterminated. His conscious mental superiority, his political experience, his keen insight into human nature, his public and domestic virtues, persuaded him and suggested to his partisans that no one of his family was so worthy of a throne. Actuated by these ambitious feelings, and rashly permitting his aspirations to prevail over his gratitude, Abd-al-Rahman began to entertain hopes of securing the sovereignty of Africa. His imprudent speeches came to the ears of the Viceroy, Ibn-Habib, a stern old soldier, who was a relative of Yusuf and had once held high command in the army of Spain. He also was acquainted with the astrologer's prediction, and was not disposed to contribute to its accomplishment by the loss of his own life and the sacrifice of his power. Despising the guests whose base conduct had so ill requited his hospitality, he tendered his allegiance to the Abbaside Khalifate. All members of the obnoxious faction were at once expelled from the country. Abd-al-Rahman was forced to seek in disguise the most secluded regions of the Desert. His condition became more and more precarious. A reward of a thousand pieces of gold was offered for his head. He sought concealment among the Bedouins, but their generous hospitality was not able to protect him from the tireless emissaries of the Viceroy, who pursued him from camp to camp and from tribe to tribe. On one occasion, he escaped from a tent just as the Berbers rushed into it. On another, the wife of a sheik concealed him in a corner under a pile of her garments. His means long since exhausted, he became dependent upon charity. His food was coarse and scanty, his clothes old and tattered. Although his youth had been pampered with the choicest delicacies of a royal table, he ate the barley bread and drank the camel's milk of the douars without a murmur. The nobility of his birth, the suavity of his manners, his skill and daring in the chase, and the patience with which he submitted to the trials of adverse fortune, gained for him the respect and esteem of his wild associates. Even in his destitution he never ceased to aspire to the throne of Africa, and, while his efforts were futile, the activity of the indignant Viceroy kept him in continual apprehension. At length, after five years of vagabondage and perilous adventure, he became the guest of the Berber tribe of the Beni-Nafsa, a branch of the Zenetah, from which his mother derived her origin and whose members inhabited the mountainous region to the south of Ceuta. Here, under the guardianship of his fellow-tribesmen, an alluring prospect was erelong opened to his ambition, and the penniless wanderer, without country or kindred, was suddenly called by the voice of a distant nation to found a new empire and fulfil a grand and magnificent destiny.

In the mean time, the civil war in Spain between Yusuf and Ahmar, ruler of Saragossa, had been proceeding with increasing atrocity but with various and doubtful fortune. Owing to the close relations maintained by Africa and the Spanish Peninsula with each other, the armies of the latter country being constantly recruited from the martial population of the former, and the governors themselves being connected by the ties of blood, an abiding interest in the political fortunes of their brethren beyond the strait was naturally manifested by the Arab and Berber tribes, and intelligence of every important movement in Spain was transmitted to the cities and camps of Al-Maghreb with unfailing regularity. The vigilance and ability of the Viceroy of Africa had at length convinced Abd-al-Rahman of the hopelessness of any attempt to usurp his power. Ease of access to Andalusia and the distracted condition of that country, with whose troubles he was thoroughly familiar, caused him to abandon the scheme which had for so long been the cherished object of his life for another which promised to be less impracticable. A seasonable supply of money had lately reached the impoverished prince from his friends in Syria. With this he despatched the faithful Bedr, who had without complaint shared the privations of his exile, to Spain; after entrusting him with a letter, in which he laid claim to the throne by right of inheritance, directed to the partisans of his family who, to the number of several hundred, inhabited the eastern portion of Andalusia. The letter was in due time delivered to the chiefs of the Syrians, who secretly convoked an assembly of their tribesmen to determine what course should be pursued. The hereditary loyalty of the adherents of the Ommeyades; the apparent justice of the title of Abd-al-Rahman; the anarchy that everywhere prevailed, and whose effects were at that time painfully manifest in the threefold scourge of massacre, famine, and disease; and the prospect of official promotion, assisted by a judicious distribution of the gold brought by Bedr, decided the suffrages of the council in favor of the prince. Scarcely had this opinion been adopted when a new difficulty was added to those which had already rendered the issue of the enterprise doubtful as well as hazardous. The Syrians were ordered by the Emir to attend him in an expedition to the North. But, by plausible excuses, the chieftains were enabled to defer the time of departure, and a gift of a thousand pieces of gold was even obtained from Yusuf under pretext of relieving the pressing necessities of their dependents, but, in fact, to further a conspiracy having for its end his own dethronement. A ship was at once equipped; Abd-al-Rahman was conveyed with a small escort of Berbers to the coast of the Peninsula, and, landing at the port of Almuñecar, was received with the acclamations of a great multitude attracted to the spot by the combined motives of curiosity and loyal enthusiasm. After being duly proclaimed Emir, Abd-al-Rahman was conducted to a castle not far from Loja as the guest of the owner Obeydallah, one of his most zealous adherents.

While these events were transpiring in the South, the expedition of Yusuf against the rebellious Berbers of Saragossa had been singularly fortunate. Overawed by superior numbers, the insurgents had purchased immunity by the craven surrender of their leaders, Amir, Wahab, and Hobab. With these redoubtable chieftains in his custody, the Emir was moving leisurely southward when he was informed of the defeat of a body of his troops by the Basques, and in a fit of ungovernable rage he ordered the immediate execution of his prisoners. By this cruel and impolitic act,—for the culprits were of the purest blood of the Koreish, and were not responsible for the disaster to his arms,—he alienated many of his stanchest supporters and materially increased the following and resources of his rival. A few hours afterwards a courier brought tidings of the landing of Abd-al-Rahman and of the new and formidable danger that menaced his crown. Thirsting for revenge, the dependents of the massacred captives deserted his standard by hundreds. The forces of the Ommeyade prince increased daily; the Yemenites, who regarded his family with a hatred intensified by generations of injury and oppression, but whose detestation of Yusuf was even deeper than that entertained towards the Syrian dynasty, were easily induced to embrace the cause of the former; and, by a strange revolution of fortune, the fugitive, who but a few weeks before had been in hourly peril of his life, now found himself invested with imperial authority and the commander of a veteran army of several thousand men. Fully appreciating the dangerous character of the revolt, as well as the uncertain consequences of a prolonged conflict, Yusuf attempted negotiation. Envoys bearing valuable presents were despatched to the camp of Abd-al-Rahman, who were authorized to promise him the daughter of the Emir in marriage and an estate commensurate with his dignity if he would renounce all claims to the throne. The advisers of the prince, whose enthusiasm had somewhat abated since they had taken time to reflect upon the possible results of their temerity, recommended that the proposals be accepted. A bitter taunt, however, provoked by the awkwardness of one of Abd-al-Rahman's retinue, abruptly terminated the negotiation; the sarcastic envoy was cast into a dungeon; and the embassy of the Emir, dismissed without ceremony, narrowly escaped being plundered before it reached the gates of Cordova.

No further course was now possible except an appeal to arms. The prevalence of anarchy, the frequent change of rulers, the pernicious immigration of barbarians from Africa, had thoroughly disorganized society. The allegiance of every subject was regarded as a mere matter of policy or choice. The armies were little better than banditti. Even the ties of tribal union had been relaxed, save when the spirit of vengeance required to be satisfied in accordance with the bloody traditions of the Desert. Treachery was so rife that no man was certain of the sincerity of his neighbor or could trust the loyalty of his friend. It was no uncommon occurrence for troops at the critical moment of a battle to publicly desert to the enemy, and immediately turn their weapons against their late companions-in-arms. The grave uncertainties of a contest, carried on under such circumstances, are apparent to every reader. The forces of Abd-al-Rahman had recently received an important accession by the arrival of a considerable number of African cavalry, warriors of the clan of the Zenetah, whose tribal connections, as well as their inexperience in the political intrigues of the emirate, rendered their allegiance less precarious than that of the veterans to whom all masters were alike and whose principal incentive was plunder.

Early in the spring the army of Abd-al-Rahman took up its march with a view to the capture of Cordova. Its course, however, was not directly towards the capital, but farther to the south, where the Syrian and Egyptian tribes—whose sentiments were known to be favorable to the cause of the Ommeyades—had been distributed. Everywhere the insurgents were welcomed with enthusiasm; the bravest warriors joined their ranks; and the towns, one after another, including Seville, the most important city of Andalusia in point of population, opened their gates to the pretender. Abd-al-Rahman had scarcely received the homage of his new subjects before he learned that Yusuf, who, aided by his counsellor Al-Samil, had collected a formidable army in the provinces of Toledo and Murcia, had marched from Cordova to intercept him. Leaving the city, the prince proceeded northward with the expectation of seizing the capital during the absence of the Emir. But the crafty old soldier was not to be taken unawares. The movement of the insurgents was at once detected; Yusuf retraced his steps; and for several hours the two armies raced on together with the river between them. Arriving at a village called Mosara, situated about a league from Cordova, Abd-al-Rahman halted. The clamors of his soldiers, who had been on short rations and were greatly fatigued by the rapid march they had been compelled to undertake, now rose ominously on his ears. A council of war was called, and it was decided to attack the enemy on the following morning. By means of a ruse, which reflected little credit upon his character, Abd-al-Rahman was enabled to cross the river without molestation. He sent word to Yusuf that he was willing to renew the negotiations which had been broken off before the commencement of hostilities; that the terms were entirely acceptable; and that there was so fair a prospect of peace that the treaty could be more conveniently arranged if the two camps were more accessible to each other. Duped by these plausible representations, the Emir suffered his enemies to pass the Guadalquivir, and, learning of their half-famished condition, even sent provisions to their camp. At dawn the troops of Abd-al-Rahman prepared for action. The day was propitious. It was the anniversary of the conflict of the Prairie, where an ancestor of the young prince had signally defeated an adversary whose title was the same as that of Yusuf. The coincidence was carried still further, for it was not forgotten by the superstitious Arabs that the vizier of the Emir and his royal tribesman both belonged to the race of Kais. These prognostics of success were diligently circulated through the ranks of the Ommeyades, already elated by the prospect of victory. The unwelcome omens did not have a less powerful influence upon the imagination of their opponents, for, disheartened and faltering, they regarded themselves as having incurred the displeasure of heaven. The battle was half lost before it fairly began.

So little confidence had the Yemenites in their commander, whose life and fortunes were staked on the issue, that the prince was compelled to exchange his war-horse for an old and crippled mule to avoid the suspicion of intending to abandon his followers in the event of disaster. The royal standard was a white turban attached to a lance; an ensign of equally humble origin, and destined to no less celebrity than the leathern apron of the Persian dynasty, for many generations the symbol of conquest, empire, and glory. The cavalry of Abd-al-Rahman routed that of the enemy, driving it back upon the infantry and throwing the latter into confusion. The right wing and centre soon gave way; the left wing maintained its position for some hours, when it also was broken. The plain was covered with fugitives, who were speared without mercy and trampled to death by the savage Zenetes. Yusuf and Al-Samil succeeded in escaping by the fleetness of their horses; the former fled to Merida, the latter took refuge in Jaen. Such was the battle of Mosara, upon whose result hinged the destinies of Spain.

The contest was hardly over before the characteristic perfidy of the Yemenite chieftains began to manifest itself. To the latter the lineage of Abd-al-Rahman was peculiarly offensive. Aside from the general and deep-seated prejudice they entertained against his family, many of them were descendants of the martyrs and exiles of Medina and Harra. Having satiated their revenge by the rout of the Maadites, and being restrained from indiscriminate pillage by the command of Abd-al-Rahman, Abu-Sabbah, one of the leaders, proposed to assassinate him. The suggestion was listened to calmly by his associates, who discussed it without regard to its moral aspect but solely with a view to its present expediency and political consequences, and the more readily as tribal interest was ever the controlling motive of their conduct. Notified of their treasonable deliberations, Abd-al-Rahman lost no time in surrounding himself with a guard. Thus foiled, the leader of the conspirators dissembled his chagrin and endeavored by extravagant demonstrations of loyalty to atone for his crime, but the penetration of Abd-al-Rahman was not to be deceived, and, some months afterwards, the treacherous Abu-Sabbah was summarily executed.

Although attended with success at the outset, the task of Abd-al-Rahman was far more difficult than he had anticipated. The chiefs of the opposite faction soon repaired their fortunes and appeared at the head of fresh troops. While Abd-al-Rahman was on the march to attack Yusuf, who had joined Al-Samil in the province of Jaen, the Emir sent his son, Abu-Zaid, by unfrequented roads, to seize and recover the capital. The city was surprised and the garrison made prisoners, but the hasty return of the Ommeyades rendered an immediate evacuation necessary. Resuming his march, Abd-al-Rahman proceeded rapidly towards the mountains of Jaen. Yusuf and Al-Samil, conscious of their present weakness, made overtures for peace; and a treaty was concluded by whose terms Abd-al-Rahman was to allow the Emir and his vizier the unmolested possession of their estates, and they, on the other hand, were to surrender the strongholds held by their partisans. It was also stipulated that Yusuf should reside permanently at Cordova, where two of his sons, Abu-Zaid and Abu-al-Aswad, were detained as hostages.

The renunciation of authority by Yusuf left Abd-al-Rahman the nominal master of the Peninsula. But the elements of discord, which had so long harassed the country, were too powerful to be restrained by the influence of a youth who was a comparative stranger to the majority of his subjects. Anarchy, sustained and promoted by the avarice of lawless bands and the ambition of unscrupulous chieftains, had become the normal condition of a society whose constituents were accustomed to be arrayed against each other, and the services of whose soldiers were notoriously at the disposal of whoever was willing to pay the most liberally for them. At first the deposed Emir and his faithful councillor seemed resigned to the reverses which had imposed upon them the conditions of vassalage. They lived in apparent harmony with the new sovereign. Their advice was frequently solicited and adopted in matters of importance. Their vanity was flattered and their dignity sustained by the pomp of establishments not inferior in splendor to those which they had possessed in their days of independence. Not so, however, with the subordinate officers and ministers of the emirate. Under the new administration all employments of responsibility and power had been vested in the friends and adherents of Abd-al-Rahman. The opportunities for peculation and official corruption, once so abundant and lucrative, had disappeared, or were enjoyed by aliens and hereditary enemies. From positions of trust and circumstances of opulence many distinguished nobles had been degraded to a life of insignificance and poverty. These malcontents, whose tribal relations with Yusuf gave them ready access to his presence, took advantage of every occasion to influence his hatred and stimulate his ambition with tales of oppression and hopes of independence. The constitutional weakness of the Emir was not proof against these specious representations, incessantly urged by his partisans. Having secretly made his preparations he fled to Merida. Pursuit was fruitless, and the sole consolation left to Abd-al-Rahman was the knowledge that Al-Samil and the sons of Yusuf were still in his power. Mortified beyond expression, and apprehensive that they also might escape, he ordered them to be cast into prison.

The reputation of Yusuf, and the habitual discontent of the masses, naturally inclined to disorder, soon provided him with a well-appointed force of twenty thousand men. With this he laid siege to Seville, whose governor at that time was Abd-al-Melik, an Ommeyade refugee. Scarcely had the Emir invested the city when he abandoned the undertaking, and attempted, by a rapid march, to seize Cordova before its garrison could be reinforced. He was too late; the army of Abd-al-Rahman was already in motion, and Yusuf retired only to meet the forces of Abd-al-Melik, whose son had come to his aid with a large detachment, enabling him to approach the enemy from the rear. A battle was fought, and Yusuf sustained a crushing defeat. With great difficulty the discomfited prince escaped the swords of the victors, and he had almost reached Toledo when he was intercepted and cut down by a party of Yemenites, who hoped by this important service to obtain favor for themselves and peace for their distracted country. Thus perished miserably the most formidable adversary of Abd-al-Rahman. His distinguished connexions; the military experience of half a century; the responsible commands which he had administered; the prestige that attached to him as the successful opponent of Charles Martel; the consideration resulting from the exercise and enjoyment of royal dignity; the numerous following which had shared his favor and hoped for the re-establishment of his power, had acquired for him a reputation and an influence far beyond his merits. His character was a strange compound of noble and vicious qualities. Courageous on the field of battle, in his tent he became the timorous dupe of every conjuror, the obsequious slave of every charlatan. While not destitute of resolution in moments of danger, he accepted, without question, the pernicious advice of evil counsellors. So absolute was this dependence that, during the latter years of his life, his vizier, Al-Samil, was recognized as the actual master of Spain. But, despite his failings, Yusuf was not deficient in generosity, nor in those qualifications which raise men to political eminence and military fame; and it was not without reason, when the events of his extraordinary career are considered, that popular rumor and personal esteem conferred upon him the flattering distinction of being one of the most accomplished rulers of his time.

As soon as he was informed of the death of his rival, Abd-al-Rahman, instructed by experience of the danger attending temporizing measures, proceeded to dispose permanently of those members of Yusuf's party from whom he had reason to apprehend future annoyance. The vizier, Al-Samil, whose talents had long exercised a controlling influence in the state, and whose moroseness of temper had been aggravated by punishment, in all probability unmerited, was quietly strangled in prison. Abu-Zaid, the elder of the Emir's sons, whose lives, as hostages, had been forfeited by their father's rebellion, was beheaded. The extreme penalty was commuted, in the case of the younger, to perpetual imprisonment, and Abu-al-Aswad, who was indebted for this clemency to his tender age, was immured in one of the strongest towers of the citadel of Cordova.

These violent and decisive measures were productive of only temporary security. The sight of the grisly heads of the Fihrites nailed over the gates of the capital awakened resentment and horror rather than fear. The country still remained in a turmoil.

Bands of marauding Berbers roamed far and wide, molesting the peasantry, threatening the cities, closing the avenues of trade, discouraging all the avocations of peace. The universal agitation at length developed into open rebellion. Hischem-Ibn-Ozra, a Fihrite chieftain, whose relationship to Yusuf, joined to an enterprising spirit, gave him considerable political influence, organized an insurrection in the North, and occupied Toledo. Strongly garrisoned by the insurgents, it had held out against the army sent to reduce it for more than a year, when tidings were received by the court of Cordova of the landing of a more dangerous enemy than had yet menaced the stability of the newly established kingdom. The Abbasides, whose capital had been removed from Damascus to Bagdad, had, under a succession of able princes, reached the summit of intellectual greatness and military renown. They had seen, with envy and indignation, the accomplishment of the ambitious designs of the most implacable enemy of their house. He had almost miraculously escaped the manifold snares which their ingenuity had laid for him. The magnificent reward which had been offered for his head had failed to corrupt the fidelity of the indigent and grasping Berbers, whose cupidity was seldom proof against the most insignificant bauble. If of sufficient importance to excite apprehension when a fugitive, how much more was to be feared from his ambition and revenge as a rival; the sovereign of a mighty kingdom, the claimant of the honors and dignity of the khalifate! Resolved to crush, if possible, the growing power of the Ommeyades before it became too strong to be successfully assailed, the Abbaside Khalif, Abu-Giafar-al-Mansur, ordered Ala-Ibn-Mugayth, wali of Kairoan, to attempt the subjection of Spain. In order to inspire deeper confidence in the powers delegated to his lieutenant, a black silken banner, whose color was the emblem of his party, accompanied that officer's commission. The details of this undertaking—the more ominous because it presented an opportunity for the reconciliation of factions; appealed strongly to the turbulent and rapacious spirit of the populace; and asserted a prescriptive claim of authority based upon conquest and dominion hitherto tacitly accorded to the monarch of the East—had been carefully pre-arranged. An understanding had been established between the malcontents of the Peninsula and the court of Bagdad. The rebels besieged in Toledo maintained, through their friends, frequent and uninterrupted communication with the Viceroy of Africa. When Ala-Ibn-Mugayth landed in the province of Beja, he was received with even more enthusiasm than had been manifested on the arrival of Abd-al-Rahman. The Khalif of Bagdad was proclaimed. The prince of the Ommeyades was not only declared a rebel and an usurper, but an effort was made to inflame the passions of the combatants, in a struggle already sufficently malevolent, by investing it with a religious character, and Abd-al-Rahman was declared a schismatic and an infidel. A price was set upon his head, and the revered name and authority of the Successor of the Prophet was invoked to effect his assassination, which was to be rewarded with the distinguished favor of the sovereign, a treasure of gold and jewels, and, by what was of far more value to the devoted fanatic, eternal happiness in the life to come.

It soon became evident that this outbreak was no ordinary insurrection. The Yemenites, whose loyalty to the cause of Abd-al-Rahman had always been suspected; the Fihrites, who had recent grudges to satisfy; the Berbers, ever ready for bloodshed and rapine; the zealots of every faction, who regarded the title of the Ommeyades as a flagrant usurpation of divine authority, enrolled themselves in the ranks of the Abbasides. The constant defection of large bodies of troops made it necessary to draw on the army investing Toledo, and, in consequence, the rebel garrison of that city was soon united with the already immense host of the wali of Kairoan. Many of the towns of Andalusia were occupied. The fertile environs of the capital were swept by the Berber cavalry. Abd-al-Rahman was besieged in Carmona, whose garrison was soon reduced to extremity through lack of provisions. The siege had lasted two months when the Abbasides, confiding in their overwhelming numbers, began to grow careless. The officers neglected their duties. The sentinels relaxed their vigilance. With the proverbial inconstancy of the Oriental, discontented with delay and impatient of hardship, hundreds deserted their standards. Aware of these circumstances, Abd-al-Rahman, at the head of a picked band of warriors, made a sudden attack by night. The enemy was surprised; a panic seized the camp; all thought of resistance was abandoned, and at dawn the chieftains of the hostile army and seven thousand of their men lay dead on the field of battle. The commander and his principal officers were decapitated; and their heads, after having been thoroughly cleansed, were packed in camphor and salt, with a label fastened to an ear of each to designate the name and rank of the owner. These ghastly trophies were then placed in sealed bags, together with the commission of the wali and the standard of the Abbasides, and conveyed by a merchant to Kairoan, where they were secretly deposited at night in the market-place. When Abu-Giafar-Al-Mansur received intelligence of the catastrophe that had befallen his enterprise, and of the fearful manner in which that intelligence had been communicated, he exclaimed, “It is the act of a demon; God be praised who has placed the sea between me and such an enemy.”

The fate of the rebels before Carmona struck terror into the garrison of Toledo, again blockaded by a great army. Negotiations were opened with the besiegers, and favorable terms obtained, conditional upon the surrender of the most prominent leaders to the vengeance of the Emir. Orders were then received to conduct the prisoners to Cordova. At some distance from its destination the escort was met by a tailor, a barber, and a basket-maker, each provided with the implements of his calling. The soldiers halted, and the barber removed the hair and beards of the rebels. The tailor enveloped their bodies in strait-jackets of coarse cloth, and the basket-maker wove for each one a pannier, which, closely encircling his waist, rendered all movement of his lower extremities impossible. These grotesque figures were then slung on donkeys, and, after having been paraded through the streets of the city, accompanied by the taunts and missiles of a howling mob, were dragged to the place of public execution and crucified.

The Berbers, whose predatory habits kept the first emirs in a state of constant apprehension and whose savage instincts were the ultimate cause of the ruin of the Moslem empire in Spain, now once more took up arms in defiance of the sovereign authority. A shrewd adventurer, Chakya by name, of the tribe of Miknesa, had, by a spurious claim of descent from the Prophet, through Fatima his daughter, and by the assumption of miraculous gifts, succeeded in gaining the confidence of these superstitious barbarians. His profession of school-master acquired for him a reputation for extensive learning in an age of ignorance; and the assiduous study of the Koran invested his person with a sanctity whose advantages he did not underrate in the selection of means to be employed for the realization of his schemes of ambition. The extravagant veneration of the Berbers for individuals supposed to be possessed of supernatural endowments, a sentiment which, in this instance, perfectly coincided with their inclinations for war and rapine, caused them to hasten from all directions to support the claims of the impostor. The latter displayed no little political tact and generalship. His active emissaries tempted the fealty of every chieftain accessible to their insinuating arts. His armies, inspired with the ardor of fanaticism, and directed with an ability not to be expected from a leader hitherto without experience in the conduct of military operations, repeatedly defeated the forces of Abd-al-Rahman; ravaged his dominions to the very environs of the capital; and, secure in the mountains of the West, defied the entire power of the government for nearly ten years. The political situation was further complicated by the defection of the Yemenites, who, on the eve of a decisive battle, assailed the Emir in the rear. The remarkable prominence attained by Chakya was eventually fatal to the continuance of his power. A Berber chieftain of great influence was approached by the agents of Abd-al-Rahman and persuaded to betray his party. In the midst of a fiercely contested engagement the Berbers gave way; their lines were broken; and a frightful butchery ensued, in which the impostor lost thirty thousand of his followers. His control over the minds of his dupes was, however, not shaken by this disaster, and he maintained the struggle for four years longer, when he was murdered by his comrades in a private quarrel. The great mound enclosing the remains of these victims of treason and carnage was, more than two hundred years afterwards, a prominent feature of the landscape, and a significant memorial of the suicidal wars which consumed the resources and retarded the progress of the Moslems of Spain.

Notwithstanding the bloody retribution provoked by every attempt to overturn the throne of Abd-al-

Rahman, conspiracy continued to follow conspiracy without interruption. Abu-al-Aswad, the surviving son of Yusuf, imprisoned at Cordova, had, under pretence of blindness, deceived his keepers and escaped by swimming the Guadalquivir. Incredulous at first, the guards subjected him to every test they could devise, all of which he endured with remarkable patience and without a murmur. The imposture was carried on for months, and in consequence of his supposed affliction he was less carefully watched, and was indulged with many unusual privileges. One morning, while bathing with other prisoners in the river, he took advantage of a favorable opportunity, and swam to the opposite shore without having been observed. His friends met him, provided him with clothes and a horse, and a few days found him safe in Toledo. In this city, the seat of Berber and Yemenite intrigue, an enterprise of great moment was then maturing. The chief parties to it were Ibn-Habib, the son-in-law of Yusuf, and Al-Arabi, the wali of Barcelona. These malcontents had for some time maintained a correspondence with Charlemagne. The escape of Abu-al-Aswad was part of the preconcerted design, his noble descent and his sufferings as a captive from childhood exciting the sympathies of the populace and rendering him an important ally. A treaty had already been executed, and presents and compliments had been exchanged between the Khalif of Bagdad and the Emperor. It was said that a secret understanding existed between these two potentates, and that the standard of the Abbasides was to be displayed by the insurgents, indirectly in aid of the Christians and with the tacit assent of the Moslem sovereign of the East. The principal conspirators sought the King of the Franks at Paderborn, where he was celebrating his triumph over the Saxons by the compulsory baptism of thousands of these Pagan barbarians. The ambition, the zeal, and the adventurous spirit of the Frankish monarch were aroused by consideration of the project, and he agreed to invade the Peninsula with a large force, which was to be supported by an uprising in the North. The plan having been minutely arranged, and the rôle of each conspirator assigned to him, the insurgent chieftains took their departure.

Implacable, indeed, must have been the resentment of the Commander of the Faithful, which could thus liberally contribute to surrender a territory, acquired by such an expenditure of Moslem blood, to the most relentless foe of Islam. The chances of success were largely in favor of the coalition. The martial superiority of the Franks had been signally displayed on the field of Poitiers over troops more warlike and formidable than those which Abd-al-Rahman could now bring into action. The country was exhausted by half a century of internecine conflict. Frequent insurrections had effaced alike the sentiment of loyalty and the reproach of treason. An undercurrent of disaffection pervaded even the society of the court; and the inconstancy of the Berbers, dangerous in itself, was even less to be feared than the deadly malice of tribal hatred, the confirmed habit of resistance, and the ruthless vengeance of disappointed ambition.

The motives which induced Charlemagne to undertake this expedition were of a religious as well as of a political nature; but he was impelled less by an ambition to rid the country of infidels and to exert the powers of compulsory proselytism than by an insatiable craving for territorial aggrandizement and military glory. The project was not an original one. It had been formed ten years previously by his father, and its prosecution had only been prevented by his death. The great sovereign so lauded as the champion of Catholicism was anything but a zealot. His orthodoxy was strongly suspected by the churchmen of his time; in fact, it was whispered that he was more than half a Pagan. His public conduct and private habits exhibited little evidence of the beneficent influence of the Christian virtues. His life was stained with deeds of perfidy and violence. The morals of his court were proverbial for their laxity, a condition to which the monarch himself afforded an unworthy example by the practice of extensive concubinage. The most intimate political connections were maintained between the courts of Aix-la-Chapelle and Bagdad, associations regarded by the devout of the age with pious horror. It is therefore absurd to suppose, as is repeatedly stated by ecclesiastical chroniclers, that the invasion of Spain by Charlemagne was mainly undertaken as a crusade, for the Franks were actuated by no prejudice against the Saracens as Mohammedans, and the relations of their king with the Khalifate of the East were more friendly than those he entertained towards any European power.

In the early months of the ensuing spring, the forces of Charlemagne were in motion. No important event of the Middle Ages has been more neglected by contemporaneous as well as subsequent historians than this expedition. The accounts of Christian writers are so defective and so overloaded with fable as to render them, as usual, thoroughly unreliable. The numbers of the invaders were so great that they were compelled to separate into two divisions and pass the Pyrenees by different routes. Converging towards Saragossa, the armies were united before its walls. The city was in the hands of their allies, but at the last moment the hearts of the latter failed them, when they considered the sacrifice of religion and the violation of every principle of honor and loyalty which a surrender implied. Other causes combined to shake their resolution. The results attending the preliminary steps of the conspiracy had proved disastrous. The leaders, suspicious of each other, were constantly apprehensive of treachery, while tribal prejudice and the irreconcilable spirit of discord prevented sincere co-operation in any measure. Ibn-Habib, the originator of the enterprise, convinced of the perfidy of Al-Arabi, and hoping to anticipate its results, rashly attacked his ally, was defeated, and soon after perished by the hand of an assassin. Long imprisonment had unfitted Abu-al-Aswad for decisive action, and he failed to meet the requirements of his position. Conscious of the miscarriage of their plans, discouraged, and apprehensive of the future, the garrison of Saragossa refused to open the gates of the city. Charlemagne, enraged by this breach of faith, made vigorous preparations for a siege. But the walls had hardly been invested when a despatch arrived announcing that the Saxons were again in rebellion, and had already advanced as far as the Rhine. The siege was raised, and the Franks retired, after an abortive and inglorious campaign, to once more defend their homes against the barbarians of Germany. The fortifications of Pampeluna—which city had surrendered at their approach—were dismantled, and the mighty host then defiled, with slow and painful steps, through the valley of Roncesvalles.

The pass grew more and more difficult and obscure, encompassed as it was by dense forests and precipitous mountains. The advance guard pursued its way without molestation, and had already reached the northern slope of the Pyrenees, when the rear, in whose custody was the baggage of the army, became engulfed in gloomy ravines, whose shadows concealed thousands of Basques lying in ambush. Suddenly the long and tortuous line was attacked by swarms of mountaineers. Hemmed in on all sides, the retreat of the Franks was cut off. Every advantage of surprise, of position, of familiarity with the ground, of experience in ambuscade and partisan warfare, was with the assailants. Resistance was vain. Bravery profited nothing where neither missile nor hand-to-hand weapons were available against an active and invisible enemy. The rear guard was absolutely annihilated. The baggage-train fell into the hands of the victors, who, after plundering the dead, quietly dispersed and sought their homes in the inaccessible recesses of the mountains. By this catastrophe Charlemagne lost nearly half of his army and many distinguished officers, among them the famous Roland, Prefect of the March of Brittany, whose career the poetic genius of bard and troubadour has adorned with many a romantic tale and fabulous legend.

No one reaped any advantage from the Frankish invasion except Abd-al-Rahman, whose destruction was its avowed object. While the enemy was in retreat, he advanced upon Saragossa; the city surrendered after a short resistance, and Al-Arabi, the insurgent chieftain, was assassinated while at prayer in the mosque. Before returning, the Emir marched into the country of the Basques, where he conquered the domain of the Count of Cerdagne, who became a tributary of the court of Cordova. Soon afterwards, Abu-al-Aswad once more tempted the evil fortune of his family by promoting another insurrection, which resulted in the defeat of Guadalimar, where he, with four thousand of his followers, lost their lives.

The last years of Abd-al-Rahman were embittered by disaffection among his kindred, whose political fortunes he had repaired, and who had been raised to wealth and influence by his boundless generosity. His nearest relatives conspired against him. Princes of the blood and nobles of the highest rank forgot the sacred ties of family and tribe in repeated attempts to overturn his power. But the wary monarch, equally proof against the schemes of both open and concealed hostility, easily triumphed over all his adversaries. His armies returned victorious from every campaign. The conspirators who plotted in the imaginary security of the palace were, sooner or later, betrayed by their accomplices, and punished with exemplary severity. His rebellious and ungrateful nephew, Ibn-Aban, was strangled. His brother, Walid, was exiled. Koreishite chieftains, convicted of treason, after having had their hands and feet cut off, were beaten to death with clubs. The remonstrances and threats of trusty councillors were repressed by banishment and studied neglect. Even the services of the faithful Bedr were not sufficient to atone for subsequent insolence; his property was confiscated, and he was confined in a dungeon where he ended his days in penury and disgrace.

Warned by the vicissitudes of a life of peril of the necessity of providing for the succession, and feeling the weight of physical infirmities induced by anxiety and exposure, the Emir, a short time before his death, summoned the officers of state and the nobles of the kingdom to swear allegiance to his third son, Hischem, whom he had chosen to succeed him. This ceremony performed, and the elder brothers of Hischem, Suleyman and Abdallah, having formally renounced their claims to the throne, Abd-al-Rahman withdrew to Merida, where he died a few months afterwards, at the age of fifty-eight, and in the thirty-third year of his reign.

The character of this great prince, gifted as he was by nature with the noblest qualities of mind and heart, was still materially affected by the circumstances of an adventurous career and the sentiments and habits of a turbulent age. His tastes inclined to literature and art, but necessity developed in him the talents of a cautious negotiator and skilful general. Of a generous and benevolent disposition, the proscription of his family, the perpetual hostility of his enemies, the treachery of his kindred, and the ingratitude of his friends embittered his spirit, and led to acts of cruelty, which, though justified by political expediency, have greatly tarnished the lustre of his fame. Reared amidst the splendors of the most polished and luxurious of courts, he bore with singular equanimity the reverses of fortune and the evils of abject poverty, trials which, by inculcating the virtue of philosophical resignation and acquainting him with the failings and inconsistencies of humanity, the better prepared him for the high and responsible position he was destined subsequently to occupy. Even before his power had been firmly established, he sent messengers to the remote regions of the East to search for the scattered members and dependents of the Ommeyades, who were conducted to Spain at the public expense, granted estates, and not infrequently appointed councillors or governors of cities and provinces. The versatility of his genius provoked the envy and elicited the admiration of his most determined foes. While his attention was still occupied by resisting the encroachments of the mountaineers of the Asturias and the suppression of formidable insurrections, he successfully repelled the invasions of two powerful and warlike sovereigns in whose jurisdiction were included the most opulent and productive regions of the globe. Charlemagne, the greater of these, offered him the hand of his daughter and urged the alliance, which was declined on account of his failing health. Fertile in resources, the privations and sorrows of youth had taught him to bear adversity in silence if not with complacency. Thorough familiarity with the character of Berber and Arab convinced him that the pretensions of the children of the Desert were incompatible with the submission requisite to the exercise of royal authority, and he did not hesitate to crush, with a relentless hand, the insolence or the presumptuous freedom of a tribesman or a friend. Popular at first, this unusual severity in time alienated the warmest supporters of his throne. Inexorable necessity, the principles of self-protection and self-preservation, dependent upon conditions not unusual after a protracted period of revolution and anarchy, rendered the establishment of a despotism imperative. Once founded, it was maintained by an army of forty thousand mercenaries, chiefly recruited from the barbarians of Africa, enlisted with multitudes of enfranchised slaves, who were bound to the interests of the monarchy by the double tie of dependence and gratitude. The romantic spirit of adventure often impelled Abd-al-Rahman, in the early years of his reign, to wander in disguise through the streets of his capital; but the animosity engendered by frequent revolutions soon rendered this diversion too hazardous, and he was compelled to adopt the seclusion and the military precautions which provide for the security of royalty in the kingdoms of the Orient. The gradations of official rank, the territorial divisions of the empire, the duties of the magistracy, the regulations of police, were also, with slight modifications, framed after the pattern of similar institutions in the East. In these details of political organization the number twelve and its factors, so popular among nations of Semitic origin, were especially prominent. The Peninsula was divided into six provinces, each of which was subject to the jurisdiction of a military governor. Under the control of this dignitary were two walis and six viziers, who administered affairs of minor importance in their respective districts. These officials were assisted in their labors by a host of kadis and secretaries, who sent, at stated periods, regular reports of their proceedings to the Council, or Divan, at Cordova. The available moments of leisure, during a life of almost incessant conflict, were employed by Abd-al-Rahman in works intended for the improvement of the masses; in the perfection of regulations which encouraged the accumulation and permitted the unrestricted enjoyment of property; and in the promotion of educational and literary facilities, as well as in the institution of measures upon whose enforcement absolutely depended the continuance of his power. He repaired the Roman highways that traversed the Peninsula. He established a system of couriers, with relays of post-horses, for the rapid transmission of important despatches. He ruled the fierce outlaws of the Peninsula, whose trade was rapine, and who considered mercy an indication of cowardice, by the only means they respected, the government of the sword. They hated and cursed him, they plotted against his life, they rejected his gifts and spurned his honors, but they obeyed his commands, for they stood in wholesome dread of his resentment, and had been taught, by many a bloody lesson, the consequences of disputing his authority. During his reign, for the first time since the Conquest, the nomadic propensity of the Berbers, the source of incessant disturbance and universal insecurity, was restrained, and these barbarians were compelled to conform to the laws and to choose a settled habitation. A code of judicature, adapted to the circumstances of a population composed of so many diverse and often hostile constituents, was framed, in whose statutes the useful institutions of the Visigoths were recognized under the general predominance of Moslem law.

Abd-al-Rahman made frequent excursions through his dominions, the better to familiarize himself with the conduct of his officers and the necessities of his subjects. His course was marked by charity to the needy; by munificent donations for public improvements; by institutions for the encouragement of the arts; by the erection of magnificent palaces and temples. But his generosity, ample elsewhere, was displayed with unprecedented lavishness in his capital, the object of his pride and of his peculiar affection. Its plan, its buildings, its fortifications, its suburbs, were modelled after those of beautiful Damascus. A palm-tree, the first ever seen in Spain, was brought from Syria, and planted in the court-yard of the royal palace as a memorial of the scenes of his childhood. In the environs of the city he laid out a garden, called Rusafah, after one formerly possessed by his grandfather, Hischem, and of which it was the counterpart. A mint was founded in Cordova, whose coins were identical in design, weight, and inscription with the pieces issued by the Ommeyade princes of Syria. The fame of the court and the reputation of the sovereign attracted to the Moslem capital of the West the learned and the polite of every clime. The spirit of literary emulation and philosophical inquiry, which attained such a remarkable development under succeeding khalifs, began to be awakened. The sovereign himself composed with facility and correctness verses of considerable merit. His sons were provided with the best instruction that the age afforded; were compelled to be present during the transactions of the Divan and the business of the courts; and were frequently entrusted with the negotiation of treaties and the administration of government. The public taste was cultivated by periodical literary contests, in which the most accomplished scholars and poets of the day participated; where splendid rewards for proficiency were distributed; and whose proceedings were invested with additional prestige by the presence and supervision of royalty.

Neither the brutal skepticism of the court of Damascus nor the prevalent idolatry and blasphemy of Spain seem to have affected the piety of Abd-al-Rahman. Whether induced by motives of interest or by sincere belief, it is certain that he ever observed with scrupulous exactness the ceremonial of his faith. Fully alive to the advantages—social, political, commercial, and religious—connected with a splendid temple, which, by reason of its magnificence and its sanctity, might become a place of pilgrimage, he had long meditated the construction of such an edifice, an aspiration whose fulfilment was deferred for many years by continuous reverses of fortune. The possession of the cities of Mecca and Jerusalem by a hostile dynasty had vastly increased the difficulties imposed upon such Mussulmans of the Peninsula as desired to make the arduous journey to the venerated shrines of the East. Moreover, the subjects of the Ommeyade ruler were regarded with suspicion and dislike by the sovereigns of Bagdad; and Abd-al-Rahman had, from every pulpit in the realm of the Abbasides, been proclaimed a usurper, a rebel, and an impostor. The success that finally attended his arms, and insured the permanent establishment of his authority, also rendered possible the realization of a project dictated by a more noble and lofty ambition. His political sagacity detected at a glance the influence such a temple would exert over the minds of a highly imaginative and superstitious people. Its erection would gratify their national pride. Its presence in the midst of the capital would consolidate and confirm the power of the state. The sentiment of loyalty still entertained by the descendants of Arabian exiles for the home of their fathers would be transferred to another land, whose shrine, if it did not equal that of Mecca in wealth, would certainly surpass it in grandeur and beauty. "My mosque," said the great statesman, "will soon demand a khalif; my sons will assume that title; and the dispute between the East and West will be terminated forever. Our constitution is based entirely upon a religious principle, and my subjects will soon accustom themselves to see nothing beyond my children but the eye of Allah and the sword of the Prophet."

In the turbulent times of the Conquest every place of worship possessed by the Christians in Cordova, save one, was destroyed. In the cathedral alone, whose ownership was insured by treaty, were the infidels permitted to perform the rites enjoined by their creed. In accordance with a custom prevalent in the East, where, however, it must be acknowledged, it was unusual, under ordinary circumstances, to violate engagements entered into with Christians, half of the cathedral had been forcibly appropriated and consecrated to the service of Islam. It was not many years, however, before its limited area was found inadequate to the requirements of the crowds of immigrants and proselytes that were daily added to the population of the growing capital. The location being the most desirable in the city, a proposition was made by Abd-al-Rahman for the purchase of the remaining half of the edifice. The bishop refused, on the reasonable ground that no other building would then be available for the celebration of the rites of the Christian faith. But the importunity of the Emir prevailed in the end; and the Christians obtained for their concessions the sum of a hundred thousand dinars, and, in addition, the extraordinary privilege of erecting a certain number of churches to replace those of which they had been deprived by the rage of fanaticism and the calamities of war.

The plan of the mosque was traced by Abd-al-Rahman himself, and the first stone of the foundation was laid by his own hands. Oppressed with age and physical infirmities, and haunted by a presentiment that he would not live to see his work completed, he exhausted every effort to accelerate its progress. A vast number of laborers were employed. The assistance of the governors of distant provinces was invoked for the collection and transportation of materials. The emulation of the artisans was excited by the example of the enfeebled sovereign, who, for one hour every day, personally shared the toil of his humble companions. The vaults of the public treasury were opened without restriction for the benefit of an undertaking which appealed alike to the patriotic impulses and the religious sentiment of the nation. The work progressed with astonishing rapidity, but not fast enough to satisfy the feverish impatience of the illustrious architect. It was his desire while he yet had strength to perform in those sacred precincts, as the representative of the Prophet, the simple ceremonial of the faith so dear to the heart of every Mussulman. A space was cleared within the enclosure. An awning was raised, and the unfinished walls were hung with tapestry from the palace. There, surrounded with heaps of materials, with half-chiselled capitals and naked columns, the Emir, in his snowy robes of office, ascended the temporary pulpit, led the prayers, and directed the devotions of a vast concourse assembled from every quarter of the Moslem capital. It was the last important act of his life. A few weeks later the multitudes who had listened with silent reverence to his discourse in the Djalma followed his remains to the tomb.

Thus, his destiny accomplished and his task performed, died the founder of one of the greatest dynasties that Europe has ever known. He possessed, in ample measure, the attributes of a wise, a politic, an enlightened sovereign. His spirit had been chastened and his courage tried by many years of persecution and misfortune. The cruelty with which he has been reproached was a necessary consequence of the turbulent condition of the society he was called upon to govern. The solution of the political problem which confronted him was not a mere question of supremacy; it involved the integrity of the Saracen domination in the Peninsula and his own existence as a ruler and as an individual. Force was the only argument used by his adversaries, and the only one they respected. The influence of the Koran was scarcely felt. The great majority of the inhabitants of Spain were Pagans and infidels. The Berbers, who largely preponderated, were fetich worshippers and believers in witchcraft and sorcery. Years of impunity and unrestricted license had rendered these wild barbarians more ferocious in disposition, more impatient of control. Public hostility and private feuds, the acrimonious disputes between contending sects, the alternate proscriptions of successful factions, the hope of future revenge, made permanent reconciliation impossible. In every community existed a large and compact body of enemies, different in nationality, antagonistic in faith, firmly united by the evils of common misfortune, who entertained, under a delusive aspect of submission, dangerous aspirations for political and religious liberty. Those nearest in blood to the monarch sought, with unnatural vindictiveness, the life of their kinsman and benefactor. In the Asturian mountains the power of a rising kingdom, established by a band of intrepid exiles, had begun seriously to encroach upon the Moslem possessions of the North. The arms of the most powerful sovereigns of Europe and Asia were directed, from the Mediterranean and from the Pyrenees, against a prince whose dominions were agitated and whose resources impaired by anarchy and sedition. Exasperated by the interference of the Abbasides, he long contemplated an expedition to the coast of Syria, a project which the obstinacy of his domestic enemies made impossible. Under such conditions government by the scimetar was certainly not inexcusable. These considerations demanded also the employment of foreign mercenaries. They stimulated the vigilance and justified the severity of the judicial tribunals. They prompted the cultivation of religious sentiments as an auxiliary of royal power by the erection of superb houses of worship. They suggested the statesmanlike expedient of diverting the attention of the populace from scenes of disorder, by the endowment of public institutions, by the cultivation of the arts, by the diffusion of knowledge.

Abd-al-Rahman was not, by nature, tyrannical. He was ever ready to listen to the complaints and redress the wrongs of the unfortunate. The most bitter partisanship never refused him the attribute of strict and impartial justice. If his severity was sometimes not tempered by compassion, it was never aggravated by deliberate cruelty. In his privacy he was affable; in his public conduct dignified; in his intercourse with his inferiors the embodiment of gentle courtesy. Temperate in his pleasures, the court of Cordova never exhibited the disgraceful scenes that offended religion and decency in the palaces and gardens of Damascus. Without him the Ommeyade dynasty of the West would never have existed; and without that dynasty a large portion of the treasures of ancient learning would have been forever lost; the spirit of scientific inquiry would have been crushed by ecclesiastical intolerance; the hopes of intellectual freedom suppressed; and the civilization of Europe retarded for many centuries.

From the accession of Abd-al-Rahman I. dates the autonomy of Moorish Spain under the Khalifate of the West. Its rulers, however, while enjoying all the power and attributes of independent sovereigns, and, as such, requiring the implicit obedience of their subjects and the recognition of foreign nations, did not, until the reign of Abd-al-Rahman III., publicly assume the title of Successors of the Prophet, but exercised their despotism under the less conspicuous appellation of Emirs, or Governors. Many inducements led to the adoption of this policy. Moslems still generally regarded the regions of the East as the source of orthodox belief and the seat of legitimate empire. The survivors of the House of Ommeyah were under the ban of the dynasty of Damascus and Bagdad. The conditions of society in the Peninsula were unsettled. Everywhere the slightest pretext for rebellion was welcomed with rejoicing by multitudes of desperate outlaws and fanatics. Ambitious enthusiasts lost no opportunity of inflaming the public mind, only too susceptible to agitation, whenever a revolt could increase their gains or contribute to their notoriety. The union of Church and State under the constitution of Islam made interference with the established order of affairs doubly perilous. The premature appropriation of the venerated title of Khalif by the exiled Ommeyade princes would have entailed the reproach of sacrilege, and might have overturned their empire, neither founded on prescriptive right, supported by popular affection, nor maintained by adequate military force. The assertion of pretensions far less obnoxious to religious prejudice had frequently produced serious disorders. By such a claim the dignity of the greatest of Mohammedan dynasties could receive no accession commensurate with the risk it involved. Its princes might well, for a time, forego the titles while in full possession of the substance of power. Such were some of the politic considerations which long retained, in a nominally subordinate capacity, the most despotic and irresponsible monarchs of Europe.

The awakening of the national spirit consequent upon the civil wars of Spain not only permitted the organization of the kingdom of the Asturias, but it was also productive of a disaster scarcely less serious, —the loss of the Moslem possessions in France. From the day of his accession, the energies of Pepin were devoted to the conquest and expulsion of the Moorish colonists of Provence and Languedoc. The treason of a Gothic chieftain delivered into his hands the principal cities of Septimania, except Narbonne. That capital sustained a siege of more than six years' duration, an intense prejudice against the Franks inducing the Roman and Gothic inhabitants to support the efforts of the Arab garrison; but in the end, the popular discontent and the hopeless prospect of assistance from Cordova impelled the prominent citizens to propose terms of accommodation with the enemy. A capitulation was arranged by which the besieged were to be conceded the privilege of government by their own laws, but at the last moment the Saracens refused their assent; hostilities were resumed, and the garrison, greatly outnumbered by the Christian mob, was annihilated. For forty-one years the laws, the customs, and the religion of the Moslems had prevailed in Southern France. The traces of their domination, as disclosed by the physical and mental characteristics of the peasantry, have not been effaced by the vicissitudes of more than a thousand years. This temporary occupation, as will be seen hereafter, was also productive of a marked effect upon the manners and the polite literature of Europe, through the diffusion of Hispano-Arab culture, the influence of the lays of the troubadours, and the adoption of the laws of chivalry. The intercourse with the Khalifate of Spain, suspended for a period, was renewed; relations of even closer intimacy were established; a community of ideas, tastes, and sympathies developed sentiments of mutual esteem; and the characteristics of the brilliant and intellectual society of Cordova were reflected in the refined voluptuousness, the extensive learning, and the polished skepticism that subsequently distinguished the courts of the Albigensian princes.

CHAPTER IX

REIGN OF HISCHEM I.; REIGN OF AL-HAKEM I.

788–822

Custom of Royal Succession violated by the Will of Abd-al-Rahman—Accession of Hischem—Revolt of Suleyman and Abdallah—They are routed and their Armies dispersed—Clemency of the Emir—Invasion of Septimania—Defeat of the Franks—Indecisive Results of the Campaign—Public Works of Hischem—His Noble Charäcter—His Partiality for Theologians—The Southern Suburb of Cordova—Death of Hischem—General Distrust of Al-Hakem—Suleyman and Abdallah again in Rebellion—Civil War—The Gothic March—Siege and Capture of Barcelona—Apathy of the Emir—Importance of the Conquest—The Edrisite Dynasty—Disturbances at Toledo—"The Day of the Ditch"—The Royal Body-Guard—Revolt of the Faquis—Its Results—League of the Asturians and Frankish Princes—Legend of St. James the Apostle — Death of Al-Hakem — His Character.

IN designating his favorite son, Hischem, as his successor, Abd-al-Rahman unconsciously laid the foundation of endless and irreconcilable domestic feuds, in addition to the manifold causes of political discord already existing between the antagonistic elements which composed the population of the Peninsula. The hand of despotism had suppressed the manifestations of popular discontent, but it was evident that this suppression was only temporary. The normal condition of Arab and Berber, by tradition, by inheritance, by practice, was one of haughty independence, of open defiance of established authority. The dictates of political wisdom, as well as the experience of the civilized nations of ancient times, had demonstrated beyond dispute the advantages of the law of primogeniture. That law, while not recognized by the Moslem constitution, had been adopted for the sake of expediency, and in time was confirmed by custom and precedent. The choice of his heir was tacitly left to the sovereign, to be ratified by the homage of the great officers of the kingdom; a mere formality whereby a concession was made to the prejudices of the tribesmen, but which was, in fact, devoid of political significance. The omission of this ceremony would not have affected the investiture of the heir, nor have impaired the validity of his title; it would only have afforded a plausible pretext for some ambitious chieftain to foment an insurrection. Several reasons combined to induce Abd-al-Rahman to prefer Hischem to his elder brethren. His mother, the beautiful Holal, was his favorite concubine. She had been presented to him, in an interval of peace, by his old adversary Yusuf, and had from that hour acquired a great influence over him. Hischem was born in Spain, while his brothers Suleyman and Abdallah were natives of Syria, a fact which it might be presumed would the more readily secure to the former the attachment of his subjects. But the principal reason that determined the choice of Abd-al-Rahman was his knowledge of the mental and moral superiority evinced by the character of Hischem. His life was in strong and favorable contrast with those of his brothers. They were idle, dissipated, and frivolous. While their houses were constantly filled with a mob of buffoons and dancers, his hours were passed in the society of the learned and the wise. He had enjoyed the best educational advantages to be obtained, and had diligently profited by them. He had repeatedly displayed his capacity for government under trying circumstances, and his presence of mind and courage in more than one bloody field. His precocious sagacity and wisdom, the affability of his manners, the piety of his life, the gentleness of his disposition, were the delight of the court and the envy of his companions. The arbitrary selection of Abd-al-Rahman, dictated by affection and policy and sanctioned by Mohammedan custom, was justified by the prosperous reign of Hischem; yet, by establishing a dangerous precedent in the polity of the Western Khalifate, it was, in no trifling degree, responsible for its ultimate overthrow. In this respect, however, its history is but the counterpart of that of every other Moslem power. The ideas dominating the various constituents of the society of Islam were incompatible with either the just subordination of classes or the permanence of empire.

The exigencies of the time demanded the talents of an active and resolute sovereign. The fiery passions of the people, hitherto restrained by fear, awaited only a favorable occasion to break out into rebellion. On every side were indications of future trouble,—the agitation of the populace, the ambition of pretenders, the rivalry of sects, were plainly visible to the discerning eye under a deceptive appearance of order and tranquillity. The allegiance of the walis of the eastern frontier, always precarious, was becoming daily more unreliable. Their distance from the seat of government, their proximity to the land of the Franks, their aspirations for independence, and their control of the passes of the Pyrenees, all considerations of vital political importance, while they increased their arrogance at the same time weakened their fidelity. The disasters which had heretofore attended the active interference of the Abbasides in the affairs of the Peninsula had inculcated a salutary lesson; but the court of Bagdad was not intimidated by the checks it had sustained, and the resources of intrigue and the influence of gold were constantly employed to enlist the services of the Christians and to corrupt the integrity of the officers entrusted with the defence of strongholds, whose possession would facilitate the destruction of the rival dynasty which had wrested from the Commander of the Faithful one of the richest portions of his inheritance. To add to the difficulties of the situation, the kingdom of the Asturias, whose existence was due to the internecine strife of its enemies rather than to the talents of its rulers or the valor of its people, now began to disclose nascent evidences of that power which subsequently attained such a prodigious development.

Hischem, who was governor of Merida, was proclaimed Emir of Spain at that city as soon as the obsequies of his father had been performed. Already well known to and beloved by his subjects, the public prayer, repeated from the mimbar of every mosque, seemed the announcement of an era of national prosperity and happiness. But these anticipations were sadly delusive. As soon as information of Abd-al-Rahman's death reached Cordova, Suleyman, who happened to be in that city, left his lodgings, took possession of the palace, and endeavored to obtain the support of the mob of the capital. Failing in this, he quietly retired and joined his brother Abdallah at Toledo, where they concerted measures for the deposition of Hischem and the partition of his dominions between them. The vizier of Toledo, Ghalib-Ibn-Zeman-al-Tafeki, having been approached by the conspirators, not only proved faithful to his trust but menaced the princes with the vengeance of the Emir, an act which cost him his office and his liberty. A messenger having been sent by Hischem to ask the cause of this harsh treatment of an old and faithful servant, Suleyman, by way of response, caused the vizier to be brought from his dungeon and impaled in the presence of the envoy. Justly interpreting this outrage as a mortal defiance, Hischem proclaimed his brothers rebels; denounced the penalties of treason against all who should countenance them; and having summoned the walis of the various provinces to his aid, took the field at the head of an army of twenty thousand men. The rebels had succeeded in raising a force almost equal in numbers, which, commanded by Suleyman, already had advanced some distance towards the South. A battle was fought near the Castle of Boulk; the insurgents were beaten, and the Emir invested Toledo, whose garrison, defended by strong fortifications and encouraged by the intrepid spirit of Abdallah, offered the prospect of a long and tedious siege.

Collecting the remnants of his defeated army, Suleyman descended upon the plains of Andalusia, ravaging its settlements with fire and sword. Abd-al-Melik, Governor of Cordova, having encountered him near Sufenda, the rebels were again routed and dispersed; and Suleyman, apprised that the entire resources of the kingdom were being employed for his destruction, escaped with difficulty through the mountain-passes into the province of Murcia. In the meantime, the condition of the besieged in Toledo had become desperate. The successive defeats of their companions had disheartened the garrison; the supply of provisions was diminishing; the assaults upon the fortifications were incessant; and, Suleyman being a fugitive, no hope of relief could now be entertained. Abdallah, in his extremity, determined to throw himself upon the mercy of the brother he had wronged, and to solicit in person the pardon he so little deserved. Leaving Toledo, he passed through the lines of the enemy under the protection of a safe-conduct of an envoy, whose character he had assumed for the occasion, and proceeded to Cordova, whither Hischem had gone a short time before, the better to observe the movements of Suleyman. The amiable disposition of Hischem was not proof against the appeal of his penitent brother; he received him with open arms; and both returning to Toledo, the gates were opened by the order of Abdallah, whose followers were granted a general amnesty, while he himself received a princely estate in the vicinity of the city as a pledge of complete reconciliation and oblivion of the past. The fierce and intractable spirit of Suleyman, however, prompted him to once more try the doubtful chances of war. Among the dense population of Murcia were thousands of adventurers, whose predatory instincts had never been mitigated by the influences of civilization. These, allured by the promises of Suleyman, enlisted with alacrity under his standard. A considerable force was already assembled upon the fields of Lorca when, in the absence of their general, the advance guard of the Emir's army, under Al-Hakem, his son, a boy in years but, as it soon became evident, a man in courage and military ability, appeared before the rebel camp. Although his command was greatly inferior in numbers, the young prince charged the insurgents with such impetuosity that they gave way after a short and bloody struggle; and when Hischem arrived with the main body, the field was clear of all except the dead and dying. Suleyman, now thoroughly discouraged, made overtures for pardon, which was granted, conditional upon his perpetual exile. His estates were purchased by Hischem for the sum of seventy thousand mithcals of gold; and the rebellious prince retired to Tangier, where, safe from molestation, he regularly maintained a treasonable correspondence with his old companions in arms, watching anxiously for a favorable opportunity to assert his claim to the throne of the emirate.

While these events were transpiring in the West and the attention of Hischem was engrossed with the conspiracy of his brothers, serious disturbances had arisen elsewhere. Said-Ibn-Husein, the wali of Tortosa, refused to recognize, or even to admit within the city, an officer whom the Emir had appointed to succeed him. The wali of Valencia was ordered to seize and punish the rebellious governor, but the cunning of the latter led his adversary into an ambuscade, where he was killed and his followers were put to flight. Encouraged by the success of Ibn-Husein, the walis of Barcelona, Saragossa, Huesca, and Tarragona proclaimed their independence, and entered into an offensive and defensive alliance against the Emir. The new wali of Valencia, Abu-Othman, more skilful, or more fortunate, than his predecessor, experienced but little difficulty in suppressing an insurrection which at first promised to be formidable. The armies of the rebels were defeated; the heads of all who were captured by Abu-Othman were sent to Cordova, and the successful general, after receiving the thanks and congratulations of his sovereign, was ordered to the Pyrenees, there to await reinforcements and make preparations for an invasion of France.

The fortunate results which had hitherto attended his measures, and the knowledge that the unruly temperament of his subjects constantly demanded the excitement of arms, determined Hischem to divert to the annoyance of his enemies that active and menacing spirit which had recently been exerted to his own prejudice and to the imminent peril of his crown. And, in addition to these considerations, inducements were not wanting which might afford a powerful stimulus to his political ambition. The pecuniary resources of his kingdom were far greater than those which his father had controlled. Increasing commerce and the sense of public security derived from a centralized government had rendered the burden of taxation more endurable. Long and unintermitting service in the field had created a body of soldiers, patient of discipline, devoted to the interests of their sovereign, and accustomed to conquer. To each succeeding ruler of the Peninsula, from the time of Musa, had been bequeathed as imperative religious obligations, the extension of territory subject to tribute, and perpetual war with the infidel. A thirst for revenge was now added to the original incentives of ambition and proselytism,—a desire to wipe out, by a series of fresh triumphs, the memory of past reverses, and to inflict a long deferred retaliation for frightful misfortunes endured by the routed armies of Islam. The Djihad, or Holy War, was proclaimed simultaneously from the pulpit of every mosque in the Emir's dominions. To the promotion of the crusade, every Moslem was bound by the law of the Koran to contribute in proportion to his means, by donations of money, military supplies, provisions, or personal service. The martial tribes of the Peninsula, to whom war was a diversion, flocked eagerly to the standard of the empire. One army, forty thousand strong, desolated the settlements of Galicia, defeated Bermudo, King of the Asturias, and returned laden with booty and accompanied by thousands of captives. Another penetrated the depths of the Pyrenees, seized the passes, and, either by force or negotiation, secured the temporary neutrality of the Basques. During the ensuing year, diligent preparations were made for the reconquest of Septimania, whose capital, Narbonne, long the seat of Moslem power in the south of France, had now, for almost thirty years, been held by the infidel. The city of Gerona, recently taken by the Franks, was stormed, pillaged, and its inhabitants remorselessly butchered. This stronghold—a place of great strategic importance, whose possession by the enemy might seriously interfere with the movements of either a successful or a defeated army—having been recovered, the way was open to the Valley of the Rhone. The time was most favorable for the prosecution of such an enterprise. The attention of Charlemagne was engaged by the seditions of the discontented barbarians of Germany. Louis, King of Aquitaine, was in Italy, where he had gone to assist his brother, Pepin, hard pressed by the Lombards. The country was in a practically defenceless condition; drained of its troops; deprived of its sovereign; with a population which, for the space of almost a generation, had not been accustomed to the use of arms, or had experienced the calamities of invasion. The Saracens met with few impediments. No organized resistance was attempted. The atrocities inseparable from savage warfare marked every step of their progress. Flushed with success, the victorious army advanced on Narbonne. The defences of that city defied the efforts of the besiegers, but the suburbs were taken and laid waste.

The Moslems now moved forward on the road to Carcassonne. At the river Orbieu, near Narbonne, they encountered a force of peasants and militia which William, Duke of Toulouse, had collected in the desperate hope of checking their advance. The valor of this hero, who has been canonized by the Church, and whose achievements are, like those of Roland, the theme of mediæval ballad and legend, was unavailing against the furious onset of the Berber cavalry. The half-armed mob was put to flight; but the victors, intimidated by this unexpected appearance of an army, and fearful of losing their plunder, decamped without attempting further hostilities. It would appear from the most probable accounts to be derived from the confused and obscure chronicles of the age that a considerable portion of the territory of the Franks remained for some years in the hands of the Saracens.

About this time another army, commanded by Abd-al-Kerim, invaded Galicia and the Asturias. Little resistance being offered, the Moslems penetrated the country in every direction. The harvests were destroyed, and the peasantry massacred or driven into captivity. The churches were burned to the ground. Encumbered with booty, the invaders on their return fell into an ambush and sustained a crushing defeat. The plunder was retaken, and their principal officers were left on the field of battle. This reverse more than counterbalanced the advantages derived from the expedition into France, and it effected much towards the consolidation of the power of the Christian kingdom.

An incredible amount of booty in gold, silver, and precious merchandise was obtained in Septimania, not a little of which was found in the churches and other ecclesiastical establishments which abounded everywhere. The royal fifth alone, acquired by this foray, amounted to forty-five thousand pieces of gold, all of which was set apart to be expended in the completion of the Great Mosque. The pride of the Moorish commander, Abd-al-Melik, exacted of the innumerable captives who followed in the train of his army an arduous and extraordinary service. They were forced to carry upon their shoulders, or drag in wagons, the stones which had formed the walls encircling the suburbs of Narbonne. From these blocks, thus painfully transported from a country distant many hundred miles, through the steep passes of the mountains, was constructed the foundation of the eastern part of the Great Mosque of Cordova. In the exertion of this seemingly useless and tyrannical act of authority, Abd-al-Melik was not impelled by a feeling of mere bravado, nor by a desire to inflict suffering upon the unfortunate. It was a proceeding in perfect accord with the genius of the Moslem character. Those stones, squared perhaps by Roman masons in the days of Augustus, were tangible and enduring trophies of conquest. The boundaries of contiguous kingdoms have expanded or shrunk; language, religion, and manners have changed; populous cities of the Peninsula have disappeared; important settlements have arisen in the midst of marsh and desert; the mementos of ancient warfare are represented only by a few battered and broken weapons; but the massive stones of Narbonne, rendered doubly sacred from the touching legend of their conveyance by the unwilling hands of Christian captives, still, after the expiration of more than eleven centuries, support the walls of the proudest temple ever dedicated to the God of Islam.

To the completion of this magnificent edifice the energies of Hischem were now directed. Following the pious example of his father, he labored daily upon its walls. He lived to see it finished, after the expenditure of one hundred and sixty thousand dinars, and, although sumptuous in itself, the building of Abd-al-Rahman and his son was greatly inferior in splendor and beauty to the additions and improvements subsequently made to it by their successors. The public spirit of Hischem did not, however, confine his efforts to the completion of the Djalma. He rebuilt the bridge across the Guadalquivir, which had again fallen into decay. He erected many structures to embellish his growing capital and to promote the convenience of its inhabitants,—luxurious palaces, baths, mosques, and fountains. He encouraged the planting of orchards and the cultivation of gardens in the suburbs, and this rational and healthful employment formed one of his favorite recreations. In his character the religious sentiment preponderated, not a little tinctured, in common with the most ignorant of his subjects, with the folly and weakness of superstition. Early in his reign he consulted a famous astrologer, who announced, as the result of his horoscope, a life of but few years' duration, but prosperous and full of glory. The communication of this prediction had unquestionably much to do with its fulfilment. The manners of Hischem, already grave and dignified, became, for a Mohammedan prince, strangely ascetic. He discarded the splendid vestments of royalty, and invariably appeared clad in simple white, the distinctive color of his family. His leisure was devoted to the investigation of grievances, to the aid of the oppressed, to the consolation of the afflicted, to the support of the indigent. Neither the inclemency of the season nor the inconvenience of darkness was suffered to interfere with his errands of mercy. He visited holy men at midnight in the midst of torrents of rain. In person he distributed alms to the homeless, whom want had impelled to seek shelter under the arcades of the mosque. He walked unattended through the streets, and did not disdain to enter the hovels of the poor and bestow words of comfort upon such as seemed abandoned by the world. He was the first of his line to establish a system of municipal police to insure the safety of the capital. The fines collected for breaches of the peace he disbursed in charity. In the imposition of taxes he earned the gratitude of his subjects by only exacting the tithe prescribed by Mohammedan law. Under his paternal administration the widows and children of soldiers killed in battle were pensioned. He ransomed from his private purse all Mussulmans held in captivity, and so thorough was his search and so successful his efforts in this direction, that during his reign a wealthy citizen having left by will a large sum for the liberation of slaves held by the Christians, the bequest reverted to the heirs, as no such slaves could be found. The inflexible justice of Hischem was a prominent trait of his character. He refused to purchase a house for which he had been negotiating when he learned that one of his neighbors desired it; and, aware that respect for the dignity of the sovereign would induce his competitor to withdraw, he abandoned without hesitation the coveted property to the latter. In the conduct of complex and doubtful affairs of government Hischem justified the discernment of his father, which had selected him to the prejudice of his elder brethren. His courage and firmness inspired the fear and respect of his enemies. He frequently despatched emissaries to the courts of the walis, empowered to examine into their official conduct and to hear the complaints of their subjects. By the liberality he displayed in the construction of public edifices, he awakened the emulation of the rich, who vied with each other in the luxurious adornment of their palaces and the picturesque beauty of their gardens. He inherited from his father a predilection for science combined with a taste for the cultivation of letters; and, in his opinion, the permanent benefits to be derived from literature and the arts were far preferable to the transitory pleasures of sensual gratification. The prediction of the astrologer, which to eight years had prescribed the duration of his reign, developed in a mental constitution naturally inclined to morality a sentiment of deep reverence for everything connected with religion. Partly with a view to the fusion of races and the reconciliation of hereditary enmities, but chiefly in the hope of their eventual conversion, he made the use of the Arabic tongue obligatory in the schools of Jews and Christians; thus, in his zeal for proselytism, violating the wise tolerance which the Koran accords to tributary infidels. By this act of profound statesmanship he unconsciously effected in a few years a political and social revolution, which, under ordinary conditions, many generations would not have sufficed to accomplish. No isolation is so thorough as that which is caused by the preservation and use of an unfamiliar idiom. Even the social alienation induced and maintained by the observance of religious practices regarded as heretical is not so deep or persistent. By the compulsory adoption of the language of the conquerors, the tributary sects became daily better acquainted with the creed, the characteristics, and the opinions of their masters. Their prejudices contracted through ignorance were gradually dispelled amidst the requirements of business and the courtesies and recreations of familiar intercourse. The Christian learned to esteem the Moslem; the Moslem, by degrees, entertained less contempt for the Christian. An appreciation of each other's virtues, mutual concessions, and hopes of prospective advantage soon produced closer relations in trade, intermarriages, and the formation of intimate and durable friendships. Proselytism to the faith of Islam—once an occurrence as rare as it was abhorrent—at last became so common as scarcely to excite remark. The Gothic costume was superseded by the turbans and flowing robes of the Orient. The harems of the rich and powerful were ruled by favorites born in Teutonic and Roman households. The customs of the latter were those of the Desert. Their surroundings had nothing in common with the traditions of their ancestry or the memories of their youth. Their children knew no other tongue but Arabic. The lasting consequences of this law of Hischem, in the partial amalgamation of three races and the seal it impressed upon their product, are to-day manifested in the swarthy complexions, the guttural accents, the grace and dignity of bearing which distinguish the peasantry of Northern Andalusia, who, living near the capital of the khalifate, the more readily obeyed the mandates of its court, and were the more susceptible to the influence of its manners.

Unfortunately for the future tranquillity of the Peninsula, Hischem was a fast friend of the theologians. His most intimate associates were chosen from the faquis,—half-priests, half-lawyers,—whose studies were divided between the elucidation of sacred traditions and the interpretation of the principles of jurisprudence. Discouraged by the firm policy of Abd-al-Rahman, this order had assumed a sudden and ominous importance under the favorable auspices of his successor. It was an era of unprecedented religious excitement in the domain of Islam. New sects, with whose organization and maintenance politics had often quite as much to do as theology, were forming everywhere. One which had obtained great popularity and was destined eventually to be included in the four recognized by true believers as orthodox had been recently founded at Medina by the famous doctor, Malik-Ibn-Anas. A bond of union, based on antipathy to a common enemy, was soon established between the Oracle of Medina and the monarch of Spain. Notwithstanding his claims to pious consideration as the founder of a new theological school, Ibn-Anas had been suspected of encouraging the pretensions of a descendant of Ali—of the detested sect of the Schiites—to the throne of the Abbasides. Either from insufficiency of evidence, or through fear of insurrection, the Khalif of Bagdad had not imposed sentence of death upon the offender, but he had ordered him to be scourged, which punishment had been inflicted with every accompaniment of brutality and insult by the zealous officials of the Hedjaz. Conscious of his influence, and consumed with rage and hatred, the venerable fanatic bore his injuries like a martyr, concealing under an appearance of resignation the fury of his implacable resentment.

Abhorrence of his oppressors led him to turn for sympathy to the Ommeyades, whose princes, like himself, had experienced the relentless persecution and insatiable vengeance of the tyrants of Damascus and Bagdad. The noble character of Hischem was not unknown to the inhabitants of the Holy Cities. The admiration of the Medinese doctor for the Emir, perhaps increased somewhat by a desire to profit by past humiliation, and to indirectly disparage his enemies, became extravagant. He lost no occasion of praising him as a pattern of the kingly virtues, and went so far as to declare publicly that he, of all the princes of Islam, was the only one worthy of the undivided honors of the khalifate. On the other hand, Hischem entertained the greatest respect for the theologian, whose doctrines he adopted and sedulously endeavored to propagate throughout his dominions by every inducement to which the human mind is susceptible. The Malikites were among those highest in his confidence. They administered the most responsible employments of Church and State. They were entrusted with important commands in the army. The Emir afforded every facility to such as desired to pursue their studies under the eye of the great interpreter of the law, and these, at their return, were received with every mark of respect and consideration. In consequence of this impolitic favoritism, the Malikites soon obtained a preponderating and dangerous influence in public affairs. The sect was dominated by a limited number of shrewd and ambitious faquis, whose opinions, received by the ignorant as infallible, were supposed to be prompted by divine inspiration, and whose wild fanaticism was justly regarded by themselves as the most efficient means for the attainment to supreme power. Neither the Berbers, nor the Arabs of pure blood, seem to have embraced the new doctrine with any great degree of enthusiasm. Its most ardent champions were the renegades, apostates from Christianity, or the descendants of converted tributaries and slaves. The obligations of no particular creed were recognized as paramount by these careless proselytes, born and bred in an atmosphere of turmoil and revolution, and to whose impulsive and fickle natures the heat of controversy incident to the promulgation of a new belief and the excitement of a foray were equally acceptable. Mutual sympathy and the ambitious designs of their leaders suggested the association and residence of these sectaries in quarters where their power could be most advantageously employed in times of sedition. One of these localities was the southern suburb of Cordova, separated from the city by the Guadalquivir. It was one of the most attractive and beautiful portions of the capital. Its population exceeded twenty thousand souls. Its markets were filled with all the evidences of a widely extended and profitable traffic. Through its gates were conveyed the larger proportion of the provisions consumed by the inhabitants of the metropolis and no inconsiderable part of its merchandise obtained from the rich provinces of the East. These were transported from the suburb to the bazaars by means of the stupendous bridge constructed by the Cæsars and remodelled by Al-Samh and Hischem. The level surface bounded by the left bank of the Guadalquivir was more favorable for building than the inequalities of the ground on the north and west. The streets were wider than those elsewhere; the markets more commodious; the mosques and villas not less sumptuous and elegant. A belt of beautiful gardens—traversed by walks of pebbles laid in mosaic and cooled by the spray of countless fountains, amidst whose verdure nestled the pleasure-houses of the wealthy—encircled the entire suburb. Here was the stronghold of the Malikite sect, the increasing power and insolence of whose spiritual guides were preparing for their wretched dupes a day of unspeakable calamity.

Eight years from the date of the horoscope had been declared by the astrologer to be the limit of the life of Hischem. The strength of his intellect was not sufficient to reject a prediction which was universally accepted by a credulous and superstitious race with the same reverence that, in ancient times, attached to the mysterious response of an oracle. A pattern of religious virtue, he had long disciplined his mind to obey, without repining, the inevitable decrees of fate, and the prospect of an early death, while it seriously disconcerted his plans, could not disturb his equanimity. As the time set for the accomplishment of the prophecy approached, the Emir assembled the Great Council of the realm to swear fealty to his son, Al-Hakem, who was to succeed him. This ceremony concluded, he addressed the young prince in the following words, which are far better calculated than any eulogy to describe his own character: "Dispense justice without distinction to the poor and to the rich, be kind and gentle to those dependent upon thee, for all are alike the creatures of God. Entrust the keeping of thy cities and provinces to loyal and experienced chieftains; chastise without pity ministers who oppress thy subjects; govern thy soldiers with moderation and firmness; remember that arms are given them to defend, not to devastate, their country; and be careful always that they are regularly paid, and that they may ever rely upon thy promises. Strive to make thyself beloved by thy people, for in their affection is the security of the state, in their fear its danger, in their hatred its certain ruin. Protect those who cultivate the fields and furnish the bread that sustains us; do not permit their harvests to be injured, or their forests to be destroyed. Act in all respects so that thy subjects may bless thee and live in happiness under thy protection, and thus, and in no other way, wilt thou obtain the renown of the most glorious of princes."

Early in the following spring Hischem expired, after a short illness, in the fortieth year of his age. His reign had not been distinguished by great military enterprises, nor by measures that indicated the possession of more than ordinary talents for the requirements of politics or the art of government. But although his administration was not brilliant it was eminently successful. He had checked the impetuous ardor of the Asturians. He had invaded and ravaged with impunity the provinces of the most illustrious and powerful monarch in Europe. He had thwarted the repeated attempts of desperate adventurers to overturn his throne. He had gained the applause of his enemies by his clemency, and won the admiration of his friends by his generous treatment of his rebellious kinsmen. No unfortunate was so degraded as to be unworthy of his notice, no sufferer too obscure to be the recipient of his bounty. By the enforcement of judicious regulations he had accomplished much towards the removal of those social and political barriers which separated the races and menaced the prosperity of his kingdom. By his influence and example he gave fresh impulse to the cultivation of letters. The universal sorrow manifested by all classes at the news of his death announced the depth of the esteem and affection everywhere entertained for his character.

It was with ill-concealed anxiety that the subjects of the emirate expected the first act of the administration of Al-Hakem. It is true no one doubted his ability. His military prowess had already been demonstrated, for, while yet a boy, he had at the head of an inferior force annihilated the army of his uncle on the plains of Lorca. The prophetic sagacity of his father, in accordance with the custom of his princely line, had early familiarized him with the functions of a ruler by his employment in offices of grave responsibility. His education had been entrusted to the best scholars of the time, and he had proved an apt and intelligent pupil. The fortuitous but important advantages of personal beauty and a distinguished presence were not wanting to this heir to the glory and the misfortunes of the Ommeyades. Yet, though reared in the publicity of a court and habituated to the transaction of official business, little was known of the disposition and the private opinions of Al-Hakem. A stolid apathy and an impenetrable reserve effectually concealed his emotions. His feelings never relaxed even in the presence of his most intimate associates, upon whom, moreover, his confidence was grudgingly bestowed. But the veil which enveloped his character could not hide the fact that he was irascible, arrogant, vainglorious, and cruel. The event proved that the apprehensions of the shrewd observers who regarded his accession with manifest uneasiness and distrust were not entirely without foundation.

It was the practice of the Ommeyades with the advent of a new sovereign to change the hajib, or high chamberlain, whose duties and authority coincided with those of a prime minister, or chief dignitary of state. For this responsible employment, Al-Hakem selected Abd-al-Kerim, son of Abd-al-Walid, who had filled the position under his father. Eminent for bravery and learning, and versed in all the accomplishments of the age, Abd-al-Kerim had, from childhood, enjoyed the friendship and shared the amusements of his master. This choice was accepted as a happy augury of the future conduct of the new ruler, and contributed greatly to allay the fears of those who had questioned his intention and his ability to control the fiery passions of youth, which the possession of irresponsible power offered no inducements, save those enjoined by the precepts of morality, to restrain. His qualities as a politician and a general were destined to be soon put to the test in the suppression of an extensive insurrection, the prelude of an unquiet and sanguinary reign. His uncle, Suleyman, had long meditated, in the security of exile, designs against the crown, which he considered his birthright. His royal lineage, great wealth, and affable demeanor had gained for him a host of adherents among the adventurers and banditti who inhabited the city of Tangier and infested its environs. Their ambition was excited by magnificent promises, and their cupidity stimulated by the prospect of a contest whose prizes were the acquisition of untold wealth and the exercise of boundless license. The gold of Suleyman had corrupted many dissatisfied officials and a majority of the Berber chieftains. The moment so long awaited by the conspirators had now arrived. Abdallah, secretly leaving his estate at Toledo, joined his brother at Tangier. The details of an uprising were arranged, and every resource was employed to insure the success of the enterprise. Abdallah made a rapid journey from Tangier to Aix-la-Chapelle. The object of this embassy has never been disclosed, but from the result it is easy to conjecture its import. The aid of Charlemagne was solicited and obtained, and the co-operation of the walis of Barcelona and Huesca assured. The King of Aquitaine, with every mark of honor, escorted the Moslem prince to the base of the Pyrenees, and the latter in a few days was once more in the midst of the seditious populace of the ancient Visigothic capital. The measures of the rebel leaders were well taken. Simultaneously with the delivery of the citadel of

Toledo to Abdallah, through the treasonable connivance of its governor, Suleyman landed at Valencia with a powerful army, and, founding his pretensions on the right of primogeniture, proclaimed himself Emir of Spain. Al-Hakem, hearing of the revolt of Abdallah, had hastened to Toledo with the flower of the Andalusian cavalry and invested its walls. The lines had hardly been formed, however, when intelligence was received that Louis, King of Aquitaine, the son of the great emperor, had retaken Gerona, the key of the Pyrenees, and, aided by the defection of the walis of Lerida and Huesca, had already overrun a large part of the provinces of the Northwest. Charlemagne, eager to avenge the slaughter of Roncesvalles, as well as to extend the limits of his empire, had placed under the command of his son the picked troops of his army, veterans of a score of campaigns on the Danube and the Rhine. Recognizing the peril of the situation, and aware of the importance of preventing the union of this new enemy with those who were throwing his kingdom into confusion, Al-Hakem promptly abandoned the siege and advanced by forced marches to the valley of the Ebro. But the Franks had already retired. The details of their operations, scarcely mentioned in the annals of the time, throw no light upon their motives; but it is clear that the results of the expedition did not correspond with the magnificence and completeness of its preparations or with the hopes entertained of its success. An extreme caution, akin to timidity, seemed to take possession of the conquerors of the Saxons, the descendants of the heroes of Poitiers and Narbonne, as soon as the frowning barrier of the Pyrenees was left in their rear.

The presence of Al-Hakem revived the dormant enthusiasm of his subjects. Gerona, Huesca, Lerida, were recovered. Barcelona, whose perfidious governor, Zaid, after soliciting the protection of Charlemagne and paying homage to his son, had refused to admit the Franks into the city, now, with every demonstration of loyalty, threw open its gates at the appearance of his lawful sovereign.

The energy of Al-Hakem, seconded by the activity of his squadrons, in a short time reduced to obedience the entire territory which had been overrun by the Franks. Carried irresistibly on by his martial ardor he crossed the Pyrenees, and, by an unexpected stroke of good fortune, seized Narbonne, whose garrison he massacred and whose inhabitants he led into captivity. Elated by victory and laden with spoil, he left his trusty lieutenants, Abd-al-Kerim and Ibn-Suleyman, in charge of the frontier, and, with a force largely increased by the fame of his successes and the hope of rapine, once more directed his march towards Toledo. In the meantime, Suleyman had effected a junction with Abdallah on the banks of the Tagus. Indecision and a spirit of indolence seem to have prevailed in their councils, for, instead of making a diversion which might have still further embarrassed the movements of Al-Hakem and have perhaps changed the result of the conflict, they remained inactive, expecting the conclusion of the campaign with the Franks, until the approach of the Emir roused them from their lethargy. Fearful lest their hastily assembled and undisciplined levies of barbarians and malcontents might not be able to withstand the attack of the veterans of the regular army fighting under the eye of their sovereign, the insurgents left in Toledo as commander Obeidah-Ibn-Hamza, one of the most able officers in their service, who had surrendered the city and was continued in power as the reward of his infamy, and withdrew, after some desultory and indecisive engagements, into the province of Murcia. Here the veneration attaching to the name of Abd-al-

Rahman, and the personal popularity of Abdallah, secured for the rebellious brothers a great accession of strength and a corresponding increase of confidence. Entrusting Amru, one of his officers, to prosecute the siege of Toledo, Al-Hakem pressed forward in quest of the rebels, and resolved, if possible, to bring the contest to a speedy termination. But again the courage of the insurgents failed them, and they sought the protection of the mountain fastnesses, where the Andalusian horsemen could not follow. For months the struggle was protracted, and the force of the Emir, impatient under inaction, began to be diminished by desertions. At length the rebels, whose supplies of provisions had been intercepted, ventured forth from their stronghold. In the plains of Murcia, not far from the field where Al-Hakem had won his first laurels in a victory over one of his present antagonists, a bloody battle was fought. The issue at first was doubtful, as the insurgents contested the ground with all the energy of desperation; but, at a decisive moment, the throat of Suleyman was pierced with an arrow, and, by his death, the spirit of his followers was broken. The slaughter that followed was long remembered as remarkable even amidst the butchery that disgraced the civil wars of Spain. The survivors were dispersed beyond all possibility of reorganization; and Abdallah, by an early withdrawal from the field, succeeded in reaching Valencia, where, disheartened and thoroughly penitent, he implored the forgiveness of his injured sovereign. With a magnanimity that did credit alike to his sagacity and his sentiments of affection, Al-Hakem accepted the submission of his uncle, but insisted upon his permanent retirement to Tangier and the surrender of his two sons, Esbah and Kasem, as hostages. The latter were treated with kindness and with the distinction due to their rank; a regular pension was assigned to them; and during the second year of their residence the younger was raised to an honorable employment, and the elder, having received the daughter of the Emir in marriage, was appointed governor of the important city of Merida.

While the operations of the war were languidly pursued in the South, the energy and resolution of Amru began to tell severely upon the besieged in Toledo. The inconstant populace, weary of perpetual alarms and threatened with famine, made their peace with the representative of the Emir by the surrender of the city and the sacrifice of their general. The treacherous Ibn-Hamza was promptly executed, and his head sent by a courier to Al-Hakem; the affairs of the city were regulated with all possible expedition; and Amru, leaving his son Yusuf in command of the garrison, departed with all his available battalions to reinforce the army of his sovereign, then at Chinchilla.

The serious disturbances which had for three years employed the resources and monopolized the attention of the Emir of Cordova presented to the hereditary and natural enemies of Islam an opportunity too favorable to be neglected. In 798 an alliance was concluded between Alfonso the Chaste and Charlemagne, but whether on equal terms or contingent on the vassalage of the Asturian king is uncertain. The Moslem governors of the frontier cities again renounced their allegiance to Al-Hakem, and, under an assurance of support and independence, rendered homage to Louis as their suzerain. The enterprising genius of Charlemagne, instructed by the costly lesson taught nearly a quarter of a century before in the pass of Roncesvalles, had abandoned, so far as the Peninsula was concerned, all ideas of permanent conquest and occupation. Experience had conclusively demonstrated that the contentions of factions, as well as the antipathies of race, became temporarily but effectually reconciled in the presence of a foreign enemy. But while his armies had not been able to obtain a foothold south of the Pyrenees, or even to traverse the defiles of that mountain chain in safety, no such difficulties seemed to attend the movements of the Moslems, whose flying squadrons plundered and ravaged without resistance the distant provinces of his empire. These important considerations, and the apprehension that some skilful Arab captain might recover and retain the fertile valleys of the South, the traditions of whose people recalled with pleasure the dominion of their ancient Mohammedan masters, impelled the Emperor to found and maintain a bulwark which would be available to harass the enemy as well as to break the force and retard the advance of an invading army. With this object in view a principality was founded on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, which was given the name of the Gothic March, and its first lord, a Frankish noble named Borel, received his investiture from, and did homage to, the King of Aquitaine.

Insignificant at first, this embryo state speedily increased in power and consequence. The domain included within its boundaries had for years been the scene of bloody insurrections, of incessant anarchy, of partisan warfare. Its lands were untilled. Its inhabitants feared to venture beyond the walls of their cities. Its communications with the central government, always precarious, were often completely interrupted for months at a time. But as soon as comparative protection and safety were assured by the occupancy of the Franks a striking change became apparent in the condition of the country. The ruined fortifications were repaired. The habitual perfidy of the walis, tempted by the prospect of greater freedom, induced them once more to transfer their allegiance to the enemies of their faith. By the donation of extensive grants of territory, and the promise of unusual franchises and privileges, a host of colonists was attracted to the settlements of the new principality. The fields reclaimed from desolation again assumed the attractive prospect of cultivation and prosperity. The Gothic March became the refuge not only of such Christians as were discontented under Moslem rule, but of all those whose grievances led them to renounce allegiance to the King of the Asturias or to the chieftains of Biscay. Not a few were allured by the hope that here might arise a monarchy which, founded by the descendants of its ancient masters, would restore the laws, the prestige, and the glory of the Visigothic empire. Such was the origin of the state soon to be known as the County of Barcelona, a name of profound import in the subsequent history of the Peninsula. Its foundation was the second step towards the weakening of the Moslem power, and one scarcely inferior in political results to the establishment of the kingdom of the Asturias.

The chief towns of the new principality were Ausona, Cardona, Manresa, and Gerona. None of these were seaports, and the sagacity of Charlemagne perceived and appreciated the necessity of securing maritime communication with his dominions to obviate the possible isolation of the Gothic March, either through the inclemency of the seasons or the vigilance of his enemies. He therefore projected an expedition against Barcelona, which possessed an indifferent but available harbor, and whose commercial rank already afforded many indications of the importance to which it afterwards attained. Its situation and the intrigues of its walis had previously acquired for it a nominal independence. The present governor, Zaid, had constantly alternated between protestations of loyalty to Al-Hakem and solicitations of protection from Charlemagne. The King of Aquitaine having appeared before the walls with a numerous army, Zaid, with plausible excuses, protracted the negotiations looking to the delivery of the city until the approach of winter rendered a siege impracticable. Hassan, the wali of Huesca, also declined to admit the Franks, although he was the sworn vassal of Louis; and that disappointed prince, who had pictured to himself an easy and profitable termination of the campaign, was forced to retire with ignominy, amidst the murmurs of his dissatisfied soldiers, to the security of his own dominions.

The Grand Council of the empire, held according to the custom of the Franks every spring, met in the beginning of the year 801 at Toulouse. The object of these national assemblies was the discussion and settlement of future military operations, as determined by the arguments and the experience of the veteran warriors whose influence decided their deliberations. The abortive results of preceding enterprises had provoked the impatience rather than damped the ardor of the Frankish chieftains, and the unanimous voice of the Council tumultuously demanded the capture of Barcelona. Before the close of the year an immense army, which is designated by vainglorious chroniclers as composed of many distinct nations, emerged from the defiles of the Pyrenees. The vanity of Louis, which had suffered through the unprofitable issues of former campaigns, or possibly the entreaties of his lieutenants who knew his incapacity, induced him to remain at Rousillon until the event of the expedition could no longer be doubtful. The invading force was marshalled in two divisions,—one, under the Count of Gerona, pressed the siege of the city, and the other, commanded by William, Count of Toulouse, was stationed as a corps of observation between Lerida and Tarragona to prevent any attempt at relief by the Moslems of Cordova. The fortifications were fearlessly attacked and obstinately defended. Zaid, the wali of the city, abandoning the vacillating and treasonable conduct which had so long obscured his character, conducted the defence with an intrepidity and a resolution worthy of the greatest military heroes. Animated by his example, the garrison repulsed the storming parties, one after another, with great slaughter, although these were directed by the Frankish general in person. The losses sustained in these assaults impelled the besiegers to resort to the tedious but more certain measure of a blockade. The lines were drawn so tightly that the inhabitants soon began to experience the pressure of hunger. While the port does not seem to have been closed, still no supplies were sent to the suffering garrison by the government of Cordova. Many of the inhabitants perished; the remainder were reduced to contend with each other for the vilest and most revolting means to sustain their failing strength. They devoured the refuse of the streets. They fought desperately for fragments of the leathern curtains which hung before the doorways of their houses. Some in despair threw themselves from the walls. Others rushed headlong upon the weapons of the enemy. But despite the harrowing scenes of universal misery, there was no whisper of surrender. Even the Christians, who were numerous, took their turns upon the battlements and crossed swords with their co-religionists in the breach. No one believed that the Emir would abandon, without an attempt at relief, a city whose commercial advantages and geographical position rendered it one of the keys of his empire. At length a new army, commanded by King Louis himself, reinforced the besiegers. The distress of the garrison was increasing daily, and, his resources exhausted, Zaid determined to endeavor to reach Cordova and by a personal appeal to Al-Hakem obtain means to relieve the city. The intrepid governor, issuing unattended from a secret postern by night, had almost succeeded in penetrating the enemy's lines when the neighing of his horse gave the alarm and he was captured. These depressing events exerted their influence on the besieged, but their constancy and courage still sustained them. At length, after several breaches had been made in the walls, and the Moslems, decimated in numbers, had been reduced to despair, negotiations were opened with the Franks. The most favorable terms obtainable involved the loss of property and the hardships of exile. The gates were finally thrown open, and a long and melancholy procession of unfortunates, tottering with weakness and emaciated by famine, upon whose faces were stamped the signs of protracted suffering, filed painfully through the camp of the enemy; and the Frankish chieftains, preceded by the ministers of the Christian faith arrayed in all the pomp and splendor of their order, entered the city, to celebrate before the altar of its principal temple the triumph by which the most important province of Eastern Spain had passed forever from beneath the Moslem sceptre.

The Christian population welcomed its change of masters with no manifestations of joy or enthusiasm. A gloomy silence pervaded the crowds lining the streets, as the prelates in gorgeous vestments and the men-at-arms in glittering steel swept by in majestic procession, to solemnize, with every circumstance of ecclesiastical ceremony and military ostentation, the fortunate termination of their enterprise. In the early ages of Islam the beneficent and tolerant rule of the Moor seems to have universally won the respect and inspired the confidence of conquered nations and hostile sectaries alike. For the happy conditions promoted by the exercise of the generous principles of equity and religious freedom, the ignorance, tyranny, and intolerance of a foreign hierarchy offered no adequate compensation. From the hamlets of Provence to the plains of Andalusia, the tributary Christians, save only such as were invested with the dignity of the sacerdotal order, appear to have always beheld, with unconcealed regret, the discomfiture and displacement of their infidel lords.

Well apprized of the uncertainty and difficulty of retaining his conquest, Louis repaired—as well as circumstances would permit—the walls of Barcelona, which had sustained considerable damage from the mines and military engines of his soldiery. A governor of Gothic race was left in command of a well-appointed garrison, and, his object finally attained, the King of Aquitaine retired from the scene of such devotion, self-sacrifice, and valor. The heroic Zaid, after receiving the reproaches and vituperation of his conqueror, who, actuated by some unknown motive, condescended to spare his life, was condemned to perpetual banishment, and henceforth disappears from history.

The introduction of the Feudal System into Spain practically dates from the capture of Barcelona by the army of Louis. That system had long before been instituted in France. Its germs, as yet undeveloped, had appeared in many of the regulations of the Visigothic constitution. But the minutely defined and mutual obligations of vassal and lord, and the exact nature of the allegiance due from the noble to his prince as suzerain, had been neither established by prescription nor formulated by law. Nor did its rules ever acquire among the independent races of the Peninsula the force and extent accorded to them elsewhere. The humiliating seigniorial rights claimed and exercised by the dissolute barons of England, France, and Germany were never imposed upon the brave and self-respecting peasantry of Spain. It was long before the hereditary transmission of fiefs was fully recognized in that country.

North of the Pyrenees the duties of feudalism, once assumed, could never be relinquished. In Castile and Aragon the vassal could renounce the service of one protector for that of another, if he had previously surrendered all property received from the former or its pecuniary equivalent. This establishment of feudal institutions in the Gothic March not only assured the permanence of its conquest, but gave the Franks an influence in the affairs of the Peninsula as advantageous to the promotion of Christian success as it was prejudicial to the continuance of Moslem power.

The loss of Barcelona was, as soon became evident, a catastrophe of signal importance, whose consequences seriously affected the prestige and diminished the strength of the Moorish empire in Spain. No explanation has ever been adduced to account for the surprising indifference or culpable neglect of Al-Hakem in allowing the enemies of his faith and his dynasty to wrest from its brave defenders one of the most considerable and prosperous cities in his dominions. A mysterious silence pervades the ancient chronicles in regard to the reasons for his conduct,—so extraordinary; so at variance with the energy of his character; so detrimental to the interests of his kingdom; so destructive to his hopes of future greatness. Experience had proved him to be endowed with many of the qualities of a daring and active leader. From his very youth, the excitement of war had been to his fiery spirit a favorite and exhilarating pastime. His resources were unlimited, his army well equipped and numerous. So far as we have any information, the remainder of his kingdom was at peace. In case the Christian host was too powerful to encounter in battle, the sea offered a broad and unobstructed highway for the transportation of supplies and reinforcements. Time was not wanting, for the siege lasted seven months. Whether the menacing attitude of the King of the Asturias, or some obscure domestic sedition, which, obscured by the crowning exploit of the Frankish crusade, has escaped the notice of historians, is responsible for this apparently unaccountable and suicidal apathy, must remain forever a matter of conjecture. But whatever was the cause, the misfortune was irreparable. The iron grasp of the Frank never slackened its hold. The colony became a principality, the principality a kingdom, which, in time, consolidated with other provinces into the monarchy of Aragon, led the van of the Christian armies in the War of the Reconquest.

All authorities agree, however, that the Emir was on the point of marching to the relief of Barcelona when information reached him of its surrender. Unwilling to disband his army without an attempt to at least partially regain his lost prestige, he proceeded to Saragossa, and then, following the course of the Ebro, succeeded in retaking Huesca, Tarragona, and some other places of inferior importance. The rebel chieftains, Hassan and Bahlul, to whose treasonable artifices is mainly to be credited the loss of Eastern Spain, were captured and beheaded. No demonstration was made before Barcelona, a fact that would seem to suggest either the inferiority of the troops in numbers and equipment or the prudence or fears of their commander.

The religious enthusiasts of the capital had seen, with alarm and disgust, the accession of Al-Hakem. While not eminent for piety like his father, he, on the other hand, had manifested no particular hostility to the theological faction. Its members, however, were not his favorites. He was devoted to amusements and practices abhorrent to the principles openly preached and secretly neglected by these rigid precisians. His frequent intoxication, a vice which outraged public opinion and provoked the contempt of the conscientious Moslem, made the palace the scene of orgies that were the reproach and the scandal of the capital. From childhood he had been immoderately devoted to sensual indulgence. The pastime of the chase, which involved the employment of animals declared unclean by the Koran, occupied no small part of his leisure. A ferocious temper, an exaggerated idea of his authority, an implacable spirit, and a merciless severity in the infliction of punishment for even trifling offences increased the terror with which he was regarded by noble, peasant, and theologian. But these sins were venial when compared with the indifference with which he treated the saints and the doctors upon whom Hischem had bestowed distinguished honors and unbounded confidence. Those who had formerly been entrusted with important secrets of state, which they were able to use for their personal advantage, were now excluded from the Divan. Instead of entering the royal presence without ceremony, they were compelled to wait the pleasure of their master in the antechambers. The donations from the public treasury, which had been bestowed with unstinted hand upon every specious pretext, were now withheld. Degraded in the popular estimation, humbled in pride, diminished in wealth, derided by the court, but still retaining the sympathy of the masses, the fanatics of rival sects began to overlook their mutual animosity in the hope of restoring the vanished importance of their order, and to entertain designs against the life as well as the government of Al-Hakem.

The scheming and disappointed Malikite faquis, whose ecclesiastical character, assisted by a talent for imposture, had caused the multitude to attribute to them supernatural powers, were the chief promoters of the conspiracy. The prestige of a royal name being considered essential to their success, they approached Ibn-Shammas, son of Abdallah, and a cousin of the Emir, and, finding him apparently favorable to their designs, openly tendered him the crown. The ambition of that chieftain, however, was not sufficiently strong to induce him to compromise his loyalty. Dissembling his indignation at the presumption of those who could think him capable of such flagrant ingratitude and treason, he demanded a list of the principal conspirators as an indispensable condition of his compliance. The deputation, headed by a faqui named Yahya, readily agreed to this, and a night was designated when the information would be given. Meanwhile, Ibn-Shammas informed the Emir of what had happened, and when Yahya and his companions were introduced into his apartments, Ibn-al-Khada, the private secretary of Al-Hakem, was already there concealed behind a curtain, and ready to write down the names as fast as they were communicated. The list included many of the most considerable nobles and citizens of Cordova, and the secretary, fearing lest the conspirators, to magnify their importance, might include his own name among the number, an act which would insure his destruction, designedly allowed the reed with which he was writing to scratch upon the paper. The traitors instantly took the alarm; the house of Ibn-Shammas was deserted in a moment; all implicated who had time to escape fled precipitately from the city, and the others, to the number of seventy-two, were crucified.

The year 805 witnessed the institution of an alliance between the Emirate of the West and the newly founded kingdom of the Edrisites in Africa, destined to exercise a marked influence upon the fortunes of the former power, and whose close relations in peace and war were not finally sundered until the kingdom of Granada was incorporated into the Spanish monarchy. Several years previously a noble Syrian named Edris, a fugitive like Abd-al-Rahman from the persecution of the Abbasides, had sought a refuge in the mountain defiles and desert wastes of Western Africa. Without friends, money, or influence, he nevertheless received a hearty welcome from the tribes of the Atlas. His manly traits and chivalrous bearing soon secured for him the esteem of his protectors, and, from a penniless refugee, he rose by degrees to be the chieftain of a clan, the founder of a nation, and the head of a dynasty. It was to his son and successor Edris that Al-Hakem now sent an embassy to felicitate him upon his accession, and to propose an alliance which might be employed to contract the dominions and weaken the power of the detested tyrants of the East. The importance of the occasion was disclosed by an escort of five hundred Andalusian nobles, and the interchange of magnificent presents. The embassy was splendidly entertained by the African monarch, and a treaty concluded which, by its provisions for mutual support and constant hostility against the common enemy, accomplished much towards the consolidation and perpetuity of the Moslem power in the West. Two years afterwards the city of Fez was founded. Its population, composed largely of Christians, Jews, fire-worshippers, and idolaters, excited the wonder and contempt of the pious Mussulmans who visited it; and the incessant strife promoted by the political adventurers and zealots of the various forms of faith, who had established their abode within its walls, augured ill for the future peace or prosperity of the Edrisite capital.

While absent on the expedition to Eastern Spain, the mind of Al-Hakem had been disturbed by tidings of another outbreak at Toledo. Yusuf, the son of Amru, who, through paternal fondness and the partiality of the Emir, had been exalted to a position to the discharge of whose responsibilities his experience and qualifications were wholly inadequate, had signalized his promotion by flagrant and repeated acts of tyranny and insolence. The Toledan populace, seditious by inheritance and practice, and which, from time immemorial, had been ready to assert, on the slightest provocation, the dangerous privilege of resistance, at the perpetration of some outrage of unusual atrocity ran to arms, attacked the palace, and overpowered a detachment of the guard. The principal citizens, dreading the consequences of an insurrection, interposed their good offices between the governor and the mob, and, with great difficulty, prevented the sack of the palace and the death of its master. But the latter, far from appreciating either the efforts of his benefactors or the peril which he had just escaped, meditated and planned, without concealment or precaution, a bloody and merciless revenge. Informed of his intentions, the nobles deprived him of his office without ceremony, and threw him into prison. A messenger was sent to Al-Hakem to acquaint him with the facts, and to explain the danger which justified the adoption of such extreme and arbitrary measures. The Emir, with every appearance of kindness, excused the violence of his subjects; gave orders for the removal of the obnoxious Yusuf; and reinstated, at his own solicitation, Amru as wali; the grateful inhabitants returned to their avocations, and the city once more assumed the appearance of its former tranquillity.

But the habitual defiance of his authority by the Toledans rankled in the breast of Al-Hakem. The city had long been the focus of insurrection, the rallying-point of the discontented, the head-quarters of every turbulent and ambitious chieftain. Not even the metropolis itself surpassed it in its influence on the politics of the kingdom. The audacity of its citizens and the pride of its clergy concurred in supporting its extravagant pretensions to supremacy. The limited area enclosed by its walls had always been occupied by a dense population, among whose members the Christians largely preponderated, and over whose minds the traditions of the Visigothic monarchy exerted a power constantly distrusted and feared by every Moslem ruler who exercised jurisdiction over its territory. The Arab historians have repeatedly asserted, with every appearance of truth, that no other body of subjects within the dominions of Islam were so infected with the spirit of mutiny and disorder as the populace of Toledo. Even the descendants of renegades who had renounced their creed and their nationality—a class whose religious zeal and uncompromising fidelity are proverbial—were not insensible to the time-honored legends and historical souvenirs that recalled, on every side, the glorious events and vanished grandeur of the ancient capital of the Visigoths. The Moslems, who had settled principally in the environs, were overawed by the insolence of their neighbors, who, although their tributaries, maintained all the haughtiness that ordinarily attaches to superior birth and exalted station. Once more installed as governor, Amru exerted all his tact to allay the apprehensions of the people, who feared that his paternal pride might impose upon them a heavy penalty for their former disobedience. By every expression of solicitude, by every show of partiality and consideration, he sought to regain their confidence. He privately assured their leaders of his approval of, and sympathy with, their efforts to obtain their independence and resist the imposition of tyrannous exactions and unjust laws. He even went so far as to denounce the Emir, and to promise his own co-operation in case of future unwarrantable encroachment upon the lives and liberty of the Toledans by the despotic court of Cordova. Thoroughly imposed upon by his duplicity, the masses, as well as the nobles and the priesthood, regarded him as their benefactor, and bestowed upon their crafty governor every mark of honor and esteem. Then, instructed by Al-Hakem, Amru represented that, as the ordinary practice of billeting soldiers upon the families of the citizens was a serious grievance and productive of much disorder, this inconvenience could be obviated by the erection of a strongly fortified citadel, which he suggested would also be of incalculable value in the assertion of popular rights in future insurrections. Public approval was readily obtained; the fortress rose on the most commanding point of the city; the wealthy contributed of their means, the poor donated their labor, to aid in its construction; the advantages of location and the resources of engineering skill conspired to make its defences almost impregnable. A powerful garrison was introduced, and Al-Hakem was notified that the time had finally arrived for the gratification of his long-meditated vengeance.

A despatch was now sent to the frontier directing one of the officers who commanded in that quarter to petition for reinforcements, in view of a pretended demonstration of the Franks. This was accordingly done; and a force of several thousand troops, commanded by the young prince, Abd-al-Rahman, heir to the throne, who was assisted by the counsels of three viziers of age and experience, marched out of Cordova, apparently destined for service in the Pyrenees. When the army reached Toledo, it was informed that the anticipated danger had been exaggerated; that the enemy had withdrawn from the vicinity of the frontier, and consequently that all prospect of hostilities had disappeared. While encamped in the vicinity, the officers received a visit from the governor, who was accompanied by a number of the most prominent citizens. The deputation was received and entertained with distinction and hospitality, and the guests were delighted with the politeness, the condescension, and the precocious talents of their prospective sovereign, who had not yet attained the age of fifteen years. Then, at the suggestion of Amru, an invitation was extended to the prince to make the city his home until his departure, a proposal which was accepted with well-feigned reluctance. Preparations were made for a sumptuous banquet. In the long list of guests appeared the names of the most distinguished nobles, the most opulent citizens, the most eminent leaders, who were either suspected of disaffection or had openly signalized their zeal for the popular cause, either by open resistance or by instigation to rebellion. When the hour designated for the festivities approached, the guests were introduced, one by one, through a postern, where they successively fell by the hands of the soldiers. As each party arrived, the equipages and attendants were sent to the opposite gate of the fortress, there to await the reappearance of their masters. An immense crowd, attracted by the novelty of the occasion and the presence of royalty, surrounded the citadel. Among the spectators, a physician, shrewder or more suspicious than his companions, had remarked the ominous stillness that reigned within the walls, and the fact that of all the guests who had been known to enter none had been seen to leave, although the sun was now far past the meridian. A bystander directed his attention to a cloud of vapor faintly discernible above the ramparts as an evidence that the festivities had not ceased. The experience of the practitioner at once detected the cause, and raising his hands in horror, he exclaimed: "Wretch! that is not the smoke which proceeds from the preparation of a banquet; it is the vapor from the blood of your murdered brethren!"

The number of victims of this awful crime is variously stated at from seven hundred to five thousand. As the bodies were decapitated, they were cast into a trench which had been dug during the construction of the castle; and from this fact the deed which violated the rites of hospitality so sacred in the eye of the Arab became known in the annals of the Peninsula as the "Day of the Ditch."

The next morning the heads of those who, by an act of unparalleled treachery, had so severely expiated their past offences and the faults of their kindred, were ranged in bloody array upon the battlements. There was scarcely a household among those of the most distinguished residents of the city which was not filled with mourning. A feeling of deep but smothered exasperation pervaded the community. But the object of the tyrant was attained; a lesson of terror had been inculcated; the leaders were gone; the spirit of insurrection was effectually crushed; and many years elapsed before Toledo was again vexed by the tumults and the violence of a seditious demonstration.

About this time a serious difficulty arose at Merida. Esbah, the wali of that city, was, as will be remembered, at once the cousin and the brother-in-law of the Emir. For some cause he dismissed his vizier, and the latter, by false statements concerning the ambitious designs of his superior, induced Al-Hakem to deprive him of his office and confer it upon himself. The wali, indignant at being thus unjustly accused, defied the royal edict; the people, by whom he was greatly beloved, espoused his cause; and a formidable rebellion seemed imminent, when the beautiful Kinza, the sister of Al-Hakem, succeeded by her entreaties in averting the impending calamity. Explanations were tendered, the incensed and alienated kinsmen were reconciled, and Esbah was reinstated in his authority amidst the congratulations of his wife and the acclamations of the people.

The habitual distrust of Al-Hakem, his love of military pomp, and the knowledge of the turbulence and duplicity of a large proportion of his subjects, had led him to increase his body-guard to the number of six thousand. The impatience of the Arab under restraint, as well as his suspicious fidelity, excluded him from the select corps entrusted with the protection of the life of the sovereign. The lessons of experience, and the well-recognized principle of despotism which discourages all sympathy between the people and the army, suggested the enlistment of foreigners and infidels. Three thousand of the guard were Spanish Christians, the rest were slaves—Ethiopian and Asiatic captives purchased in the marts of the eastern Mediterranean, who were popularly designated mutes on account of their ignorance of the Arabic language. Their arms and equipment were of the finest and most expensive description. Their discipline was as thorough as the tactics of the age could inculcate. Two thousand were quartered in extensive barracks erected on the southern side of the Guadalquivir, whose banks were constantly patrolled by their sentinels. The others, whose numbers were swelled by hundreds of eunuchs and retainers of the Emir's household, were stationed in the palace, whose defences were more characteristic of an impregnable fortress than of the ordinary abode of a sovereign. The great mass of the people, and especially the severely orthodox, viewed the establishment of this large military force—whose existence was a silent reproach to their loyalty and whose opinions were considered idolatrous—with mingled feelings of hatred, jealousy, and contempt. The fierce zealots and ecclesiastical demagogues, whose arts had acquired for them a dangerous pre-eminence and whose influence had been of late years a perpetual menace to the government, regarded the royal guards with sentiments of peculiar aversion. The maintenance of this splendid body of soldiers, whose expenses far exceeded those of an ordinary division equal to it in numbers, was a heavy charge upon the treasury. To meet the increasing expenditure, a new duty was levied upon all merchandise imported into the capital. The burdens arising from the imposition of this tax, and the inconvenience attending its collection, were the most keenly felt by the southern suburb. Of this densely populated quarter, fully one-fifth of the inhabitants were teachers and students of theology. Not only over these, but over the various guilds of merchants, tradesmen, and laborers, the authority of a few faquis, who united the qualifications of religious instructors with the privileged attributes of saints, was despotic. A soldier who ventured alone into the stronghold of these desperate fanatics did so at the risk of his life. No opportunity was suffered to pass whereby indignity could be heaped upon the guards of the Emir. The monarch himself was not less unpopular. The theological faction constantly made unfavorable comparisons between his skepticism and luxury and the austere virtues of his father, Hischem, whose partiality for their sect had formerly obtained for its dogmas the highest respect and consideration. The failings and vices of royalty received scant indulgence at the hands of the Malikites. When, from the summit of the minaret, the muezzin proclaimed the hour of public devotion, a hundred voices responded in derision from street, bazaar, and garden: "Come to prayer, O Drunkard, come to prayer!" Aided by the encouragement and sympathy of their companions, the culprits foiled without difficulty every attempt at detection. Neither the sacred associations of the mosque, nor the moments consecrated to divine communion, when the assembly of the faithful bowed reverently before the Kiblah, nor the prospect of condign punishment, were sufficient to deter fanatical agitators, who prided themselves on their piety and orthodoxy, from the perpetration of outrage and insult. They vilified the monarch while in the exercise of his sacred duties as the officiating minister of Islam. They ridiculed his actions and mocked his resentment in the streets. Exasperated beyond all endurance, Al-Hakem ordered that ten of the leaders should be arrested and delivered to the executioner to be crucified. This summary proceeding, far from allaying the excitement, only intensified it. The desire to wreak their vengeance on the persecutor of their martyred brethren was now the paramount consideration, compared with which the prevalence of vice, the evils of taxation, and the tolerance of heretics were matters of trifling importance. It soon became evident that a serious disturbance was impending.

The most influential and dangerous instigator of the populace was another Yahya, part knave and part zealot, whose learning and effrontery had procured for him great renown both as a saint and a politician. He had been a pupil and disciple of the famous Malik-Ibn-Anas at Medina, and had been distinguished by the favor of that oracle of Islam. The fame of his sanctity, and an extravagant idea of his attainments and his virtues entertained by the members of his sect, had increased his reputation and inflated his pride. His intriguing genius was now exerted to precipitate the explosion.

It was the month of Ramadhan, the Mohammedan Lent, and the outbreak had been planned for the last Wednesday, a day of ill omen in the Moslem calendar. The efforts of Yahya and his coadjutors were being constantly exerted to inflame the passions of the populace by private exhortations and public discourses under the pretext of religious instruction, when a quarrel arose between a soldier and an armorer which resulted in the death of the latter. In an instant the southern suburb was in arms. The contagion of rebellion and vengeance spread fast through the other disaffected quarters of the capital. A raging mob rolled down upon the citadel, driving before it the scattered eunuchs and dependents of the palace and the soldiers of the outposts. In vain was the cavalry ordered to clear the streets; the veteran troopers of the Emir were overwhelmed and driven back in confusion. The gates of the castle were closed and barred, and the multitude, wild with baffled rage, at once prepared, with the aid of fire and heavy timbers, to force an entrance. The serious aspect of the situation was fully appreciated by the inmates of the palace, who knew that in case the fanatics succeeded in penetrating the walls not a soldier or servant of the royal household would be left alive. As conscious of his peril as the rest, not a sign of emotion clouded the placid visage of Al-Hakem. While the shouts of the mob were resounding through the courts and gardens, he ordered his favorite page to bring him a bottle of civet. The lad in wonder obeyed, and the monarch carefully and deliberately poured the perfume upon his hair and beard. The curiosity of the page prevailing over his discretion, he inquired the cause of this singular proceeding at a time of such imminent danger. “O son of an unbeliever,” responded the Emir, "how can he who will cut off my head distinguish my rank unless by the sweet odor that exhales from my beard!"

His toilet completed, Al-Hakem directed the captain of the guard to expose at once upon the battlements the heads of certain faquis who had been imprisoned since the former insurrection. Then, clothing himself in complete armor, he summoned his cousin, Obeydallah, and ordered him, at the head of a picked body of cavalry, to cut his way through the streets and set fire to the southern suburb, shrewdly judging that the attention of the insurgents would be distracted when they perceived that their homes were in flames. The event justified his expectations. The sudden sally of Obeydallah disconcerted the rabble; the river was reached and forded; and in a few moments, the smoke rising in twenty different places beyond the Guadalquivir announced the success of the stratagem. The insurgents, forgetting the animosity to their sovereign in their solicitude for their families and their property, rushed in confusion over the bridge. Then Al-Hakem fell upon their rear with his guards, and Obeydallah, reinforced by detachments from the neighborhood which had been attracted by news of the revolt, assailed them in front. Overcome with terror and incapable of resistance, the unhappy fanatics were massacred by thousands. Three hundred of those conspicuous for their rank, or for the part they had taken in fomenting disorder, were nailed, head downward, to posts on the bank of the river. A council was then held to determine the fate of the survivors. Some of the viziers advocated extermination, but milder opinions prevailed, and it was decreed that the suburb should be razed and the inhabitants banished, within three days, under penalty of crucifixion. This sentence was ruthlessly executed; the condemned quarter was delivered to pillage and the houses destroyed. The exiles, driven from their country, variously experienced the effects of both good and adverse fortune. Many parties were plundered by brigands before they reached the border. Eight thousand families were invited by Edris to form a part of the population of the new city of Fez, where neither the hospitality of their reception nor their subsequent prosperity was able to prevent them from indulgence in perpetual strife with their neighbors, the Arabs. A great body, which included fifteen thousand fighting-men, was transported by sea to Egypt at a time when the country was in arms against the Khalif of Bagdad. Forming an alliance with the malcontents, they stormed Alexandria; and then, declaring their independence, retained possession of that great entrepôt of the Mediterranean against all the power of the Abbasides for more than twelve years. Finally, reduced by the forces of Al-Mansur, they were removed to Crete, a part of which still acknowledged the authority of the Emperor of Constantinople. This island they conquered, and they then founded a state whose piratical expeditions for more than a century were the scourge of the Mediterranean until Crete once more, in the year 961, was added to the dominions of the Byzantine Empire. A reminiscence of the Moslem occupation of the island is suggested by its present name, which, a corruption of the Arabic khandik, a “ trench” or “ fortification,” survives in the name of Candia.

But while the offences of the populace were thus punished with inexorable rigor, the principal offenders, the promoters of sedition, were the recipients of extraordinary clemency. The explanation of this partiality is to be found in the fact that the mass of the insurgents was of a foreign and, despite their bigoted adherence to the orthodox faith, of a detested caste. The religious teachers of the Malikites, on the other hand, were largely descended from the Koreish, and the ties of blood and the antipathies of race were considerations of greater moment in the mind of Al-Hakem than the insult to his person or the danger to his crown. Some of the leaders who had been prominent in the late troubles were permitted to escape; others underwent short terms of imprisonment; many received the benefit of a general amnesty. The arch-conspirator, Yahya, was of this number, and his talents or his audacity soon restored him once more to a certain degree of royal favor.

The military operations maintained for years in Eastern Spain by the ambition of the Franks, the treachery of the walis, and the weak and faltering policy of Al-Hakem, were not productive of decisive action or enduring results. The city of Tortosa was twice invested, and twice abandoned in disgrace, by the armies of Charlemagne. The first siege was raised after a disastrous defeat sustained by the Franks, of which the Arabs neglected to take advantage; the second was undertaken without adequate preparation, and relinquished under circumstances suggestive of irresolution and cowardice. The hostilities gradually assumed the character of predatory expeditions rather than the systematic efforts of organized warfare. The crusading ardor of the new colonists of the Gothic March soon abated under the tyranny of their feudal masters, who appropriated their lands, oppressed them with taxes, and violated the rights which had been solemnly guaranteed to them conditional upon their allegiance. The justice of Charlemagne was invoked to suppress these increasing disorders, but the distance from his court and the arrogance of the nobles enabled the latter to practically nullify his edicts. The præcepta, or fueros, addressed to the Counts of the Gothic March, and issued from time to time by the Emperor, exhorting these lords to equity, and defining minutely the privileges of their dependents, constitute some of the most interesting and remarkable documents of mediæval jurisprudence. The last three years of the reign of Al-Hakem were passed in peace with the Franks, under a truce concluded between the courts of Aix-la-Chapelle and Cordova.

The hostilities between the Asturian and Moorish kingdoms were, during the reign of Hischem and Al-Hakem, prosecuted with energy, but with constantly varying success. The Christians had not become sufficiently strong to provoke with impunity the power of the Moslem sovereigns. The attention of the latter was so occupied with the suppression of intestine turmoil and ineffectual attempts to counteract the ambitious projects of the Franks that they suffered many of the incursions of their infidel neighbors to pass unnoticed. Some expeditions that entered the Asturias returned in triumph, others were annihilated. The forays of the Christian princes spread dismay through the Moorish settlements of Galicia and Lusitania. Occasionally they met with serious reverses, but these were generally retrieved in the next campaign; and when the results of the year were compared, the advantage was always with the Christians. They enlarged their influence and cemented their power, by alliances with the Basques, with the lord of the Gothic March, with the renowned Charlemagne. The limits of their little monarchy, once so insignificant, began to extend south of the mountains, those natural barriers beyond whose protecting peaks and ravines they at first had feared to venture. Constant practice in warfare formed a race of warriors whose prestige increased with their success, and whose experience taught them the importance of loyalty, obedience, and discipline. Their monarchs were, for the most part, eminently fitted for the arduous duties imposed upon them by the accidents of birth and fortune. Of these princes none attained to such eminence in the pursuits of peace or the art of war as Alfonso II., surnamed The Chaste, whose singular title has been variously attributed by historians to mistaken piety and constitutional impotence. His life was one long crusade against the infidel. By every resource of diplomacy, by every exertion of courage, by every sacrifice of comfort and even of independence, he endeavored to promote the interest of that cause which was identified with the honor of the Christian name. He sent gifts and did homage to Charlemagne to secure his aid; and thus, within less than a century of its foundation, the Asturian monarchy twice became the fief of a foreign power; under Alfonso II., whose allegiance was rendered to a Christian king in contradistinction to the conduct of his predecessor Mauregato, the natural son of Alfonso I. and a Berber captive, who had acknowledged the Emir of Cordova as his suzerain, and whose dependence was, in addition to the customary acts of fealty, manifested by the humiliating annual tribute of a hundred virgins. The arms of Alfonso were carried repeatedly beyond the Douro and the Tagus. He took and plundered Lisbon, already a flourishing city, but its distance from his dominions and the small force at his command compelled him soon afterwards to relinquish his prize. His desperate valor and his superiority in partisan warfare frustrated every attempt of the Moslems to effect a permanent lodgement in his dominions. Amidst the excitement of his campaigns, he found time to erect churches, to endow convents, to enlarge and embellish Oviedo, the capital of his little monarchy. The clergy derived liberal support and patronage from his devotion. It was during this period that the invention of an absurd legend produced effects upon the political and religious destinies of Spain little anticipated by the unscrupulous ecclesiastics who promulgated it. In an unfrequented portion of the wilderness of Galicia a mysterious light of celestial radiance, watched by an angel, revealed the burial spot and the body of St. James the Apostle. The Bishop of Iria, to whom posterity is indebted for the discovery of this priceless treasure, communicated without delay the intelligence of the miracle to his sovereign; and a chapel was erected upon the hallowed spot, which, in time, became a magnificent temple and a place of pilgrimage for thousands of the faithful and the curious from every country of Europe. A city sprang up around the church, which, by the translation of the Bishopric of Iria, at once rose to the greatest importance, and its inhabitants were benefited by the trade of the pilgrims, as the shrine was enriched with the contributions prompted by their piety and their gratitude. The simple Asturians never questioned the truth or even the probability of the legend; the priesthood, who sustained the credit of the fiction by every expedient of intimidation and imposture, advanced steadily in consideration and wealth, while the miracles daily wrought by the precious relic confirmed its holy character,—a relic which surpassed in the efficacy of its miraculous virtues the wonderful mementos of the martyrs which had been rescued from obscurity and decay in the catacombs of Rome. Such was the origin of the city and cathedral of Santiago de Compostella, whose foundation contributed so materially to the extension of the Castilian empire and the triumph of the Christian religion. Here first appeared the germ of that enthusiastic spirit—partly military, partly monastic—which prompted the foundation of the numerous orders of knighthood and culminated in the disastrous expeditions for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. The retired situation and primitive surroundings of the shrine, corresponding with the humble origin of the Saint and his mission, increased the popular faith in its genuineness and sanctity. The fact that the relics were spurious and their discovery a fable was wholly indifferent so long as the reverent credulity of the masses remained unshaken. The hope of salvation, the religious aspirations of the devout, the increase in prestige of the hierarchy, were all centred in the pretended tomb of the Apostle. The apparition of the Saint upon his white charger in the critical moments of battle roused the faltering courage of the champions of the Cross on many a doubtful field, and it may safely be asserted that neither the policy of the wisest statesmen nor the victories of the most accomplished generals of any reign effected more for the glory of the Spanish arms than did the fabrication of a preposterous legend by an obscure prelate in the savage and almost unknown region of Galicia.

The uniform success of the piratical excursions of the Saracens, originated under the rule of the emirs and continued by the Ommeyades, promised the adventurous aspirant for glory and wealth a more certain and less hazardous career than the military profession. The Moorish corsairs spread terror through the harbors and along the coasts of the Mediterranean. They reduced to final subjection the Balearic Isles. They plundered Corsica, established a temporary settlement in Sardinia, and threatened the environs of the most opulent seaports of Italy. But the fascinations attaching to the reckless profession of the pirate were more congenial with the spirit of the Arab than the slower and less brilliant results which must have proceeded from the maintenance of an organized maritime power, and the Moslem princes seem never to have seriously considered the construction of a navy which might, with comparatively little exertion or expense, have acquired for them the undisputed dominion of the seas.

The closing years of Al-Hakem were passed in the seclusion of the harem, where, diverted by the companionship of the beauties of his seraglio, amidst the excitements of intemperance and of every species of debauchery, he endeavored to forget the sinister events of his checkered career and the manifold acts of cruelty which had avenged the crimes and errors of those who were unfortunate enough to incur his resentment. The controlling maxim of his policy had always been that mildness was synonymous with cowardice, and that the people must be governed by the sword alone. To the adoption and enforcement of this principle are to be attributed the frequent massacres and executions of his reign. He was the first Moorish sovereign of Spain who established a standing army, that menace to popular liberty and indispensable support of despotism. The safety and health of his soldiers were secured by the erection of commodious barracks; by the collection of provisions and military stores in extensive magazines and arsenals; by the enforcement of a system of perfect and rigorous discipline. His guards, composed of slaves alien to the people and devoted to their master, were the prototypes of the Janizaries and the Mamelukes, whose pride and insubordination were long subsequently productive of such disasters to the monarchies of Turkey and Egypt. The mental constitution of Al-Hakem was disfigured by a vice not common in the natures of men whose courage was never known to falter,—an insatiable thirst for blood. Not a day elapsed when an order did not issue from the tyrant, long invisible to his subjects, delivering some unhappy wretch to the executioner. At length the effects of remorse and prolonged intemperance reduced the Emir to a condition bordering upon insanity. Oppressed with the memory of his crimes, haunted by the groans and imprecations of his expiring victims, he became the prey of frightful hallucinations, the offspring of a disordered brain. In the middle of the night he startled the palace with his shrieks of anguish. The slightest delay or opposition provoked him to fury. He summoned his drowsy councillors in haste from their beds as if for the discussion of affairs of the greatest moment, and, as soon as they were assembled, dismissed them without ceremony. He reviewed his guards at midnight. The hours of darkness were usually whiled away by the women of the harem, who strove to amuse their capricious master with music, songs, and lascivious dances. For four years Al-Hakem continued in this deplorable condition, until relieved by a painful and lingering death. His character was not deficient in many of the attributes of greatness. He was brave, generous, sagacious, constant in friendship, the implacable foe of hypocrisy, the welcome companion of philosophers and poets. Prompt in action and resolute in battle, his indecision at times of emergency nevertheless cost him an important part of his dominions. His reign of twenty-six years was filled with stirring events,—events which too plainly indicate the declining tendency of the Saracen empire, which, deficient in all that constitutes the unity and permanence of a state and a prey to constant disorder, was only saved from precipitate destruction by the statesmanship and military talents of its sovereigns.

CHAPTER X

REIGN OF ABD-AL-RAHMAN II.; REIGN OF MOHAMMED

822–886

Accession of Abd-al-Rahman II.—Defection of Abdallah—Invasion of the Gothic March—Embassy from the Greek Emperor—Revolt of Merida—Sedition at Toledo—Incursion of the Normans—Persecution of the Christians—Death of Abd-al-Rahman—His Love of Pomp—His Virtues—His Patronage of Art and Letters—Ziryab—His Versatility—Conspiracy of Tarub—Stratagem of Mohammed—His Bigotry—Toledo again Revolts—Rise of the Beni-Kasi—War with the Asturias—Rebellion of Ibn-Merwan—The Serrania de Ronda—Ibn-Hafsun, his Origin and Exploits—Death and Character of Mohammed—Incipient Decadence of the Moslem Power.

AT the mature age of thirty-one, endowed with every talent which contributes to political success and intellectual eminence, accustomed for many years to the arduous details of civil affairs as well as to the direction of important military operations and the command of armies, Abd-al-Rahman II. ascended the throne of the emirate. A handsome person and an engaging address aided not a little to increase the general esteem which had been evoked by his capacity for business and his great services to the state. An index to his popularity may be discovered in the honorable titles bestowed upon him by the admiration and love of his subjects. While a youth he was known as Al-Modhaffer, The Victorious, and his benevolence and generosity had, long before his accession, acquired for him the suggestive appellation of the "Father of the Poor." The physical and mental infirmities of Al-Hakem had, for years before his death, induced him to relinquish the cares of government, and to practically abandon to his son and successor all the power, the duties, and the responsibilities of sovereignty.

Domestic discord, which seemed to be a necessary incident of the inauguration of every prince of the Ommeyades, was not wanting to that of Abd-al-Rahman. His great-uncle, Abdallah, in whose breast the fires of ambition still burned fiercely in spite of his advanced age, leaving his home at Tangier accompanied by a considerable band of friends and retainers, landed in Andalusia and proclaimed himself Emir by virtue of his relationship to the founder of the dynasty. His prospect of success he regarded as the more certain on account of the positions occupied by his three sons, who had enjoyed the confidence and shared the favor of Al-Hakem, and who now exercised the most important commands in the gift of the monarch.

The sanguine hopes of the venerable Abdallah were soon shown to be fallacious. No sooner had he landed when, attacked by the cavalry of Abd-al-Rahman, his forces were put to flight, and, driven from point to point, he was finally compelled to take refuge in Valencia. His sons, so far from sympathizing with his aspirations, did all in their power to thwart them, and by personal appeals to his interest and affection urged him to abandon his treasonable enterprise. Persuaded by their entreaties, which were materially promoted by the timely occurrence of an unfavorable omen,—a portent never unheeded by the superstitious Oriental,—he reluctantly consented to forego his pretensions to the crown and to swear fealty to his nephew. An interview was arranged; Abdallah was escorted by his sons into the presence of the Emir, and the latter, embracing him, not only pardoned his offence, but conferred upon him the government of Murcia, where he remained in peace until his death.

The embarrassment of Abd-al-Rahman, who, at the moment of his accession, found himself confronted with an insurrection whose consequences threatened to be serious, was not lost upon his enterprising neighbors of the Gothic March. They raised a numerous army, ravaged the Moorish territory at the North as far as the left bank of the Segre, returning without having encountered any opposition and laden with the spoils of war. This expedition was commanded by Bernhart, Count of Barcelona, son of the renowned William of Toulouse, upon whom Louis had conferred the fief; the former suzerain, Bera, having been accused of treason and convicted by wager of battle, according to the martial customs of the age. The substitution of a foreigner for a native Goth whose aspirations for independence were a title to favor rather than a reproach with his subjects, who, for the most part of Spanish extraction, cherished the traditions and indulged the pleasing but delusive hope of the ultimate restoration of the organization and power of the ancient Visigothic empire, was a stroke of policy which augured ill for the success or perpetuity of the Frankish domination.

Abd-al-Rahman, aware of the political necessity of making a demonstration to counteract the effects of the inroads that his helpless situation had invited, and not unwilling to inaugurate his reign with a brilliant military exploit, prepared to invade the Gothic March with the army already collected for the suppression of the insurrection fomented by Abdallah. The advance guard, commanded by the wali Abd-al-Kerim, approaching from Valencia met the Christians not far from Barcelona, and, after a short but hotly contested engagement, drove them inside the gates. The Emir having arrived soon after with the main body, the city was besieged. A number of determined attempts to carry it by escalade having failed, and the force of

Abd-al-Rahman not being sufficient to maintain a thorough blockade, the intrenchments were finally abandoned; and the Moslem army, pouring over the country, in a few months succeeded in occupying the entire territory subject to the Count of Barcelona. The Christians, repulsed in every encounter, sought, in dismay and confusion, the most inaccessible heights and defiles of the mountains. The castles were stormed and their garrisons massacred. A feeling of terror seized the population, which included many of the most experienced warriors of the Frankish empire, who, allured by the princely grants held out to colonists and the prospect of a life of excitement and adventure, had established themselves in the Gothic March. But the expedition of the Moslems, although attended with such successful results, did not rise above the dignity of a foray. No attempt at a permanent occupation was made. The capital, which alone maintained its independence and which, deprived of all prospect of relief, could not have resisted a second attack, was not compelled to again endure the horrors of siege. Satisfied with the advantages he had gained and with the vengeance he had inflicted, Abd-al-Rahman returned in triumph to Cordova, which he entered amidst the plaudits and congratulations of the people.

The declining fortunes of the Byzantine Empire, whose sovereign, Michael the Stammerer, found himself unequal to the task of coping with his redoubtable adversary, Al-Mamun, Khalif of Bagdad, induced him, during the second year of the reign of Abd-al-Rahman, to despatch an embassy to Cordova to conclude an alliance with the Sultan of the Ommeyades, the fame of whose dynasty had already reached the extreme limits of the Orient. The envoys of the Emperor of Constantinople were received with every evidence of distinction. A vast multitude attended their entrance into the capital. They were lodged in the royal palace, and all the pomp of the most splendid and luxurious court in Europe was exhibited upon the occasion of their reception by the Emir. The magnificence of the gifts which they brought—among which are mentioned a number of beautiful horses caparisoned with cloth-of-gold and silver—excited the wonder of the multitude, for no such treasures had ever before been seen in Spain. An alluring prospect of conquest was held out by the subtle Greeks, accompanied by the tender of troops and munitions of war for the recovery of the lost inheritance of the Ommeyades in Syria; but the precarious condition of the Emir, barely able to maintain his authority against the plots of his disaffected subjects, forbade, for the present, the formation of an offensive league with the monarch of the East, and the ambassadors were dismissed with a profusion of compliments and indefinite and conditional assurances of support in the future. A special envoy of the Emir, Yahya-al-Ghazzali, so named for his extraordinary charms of person and manner, and equally famous as a poet and a diplomatist, accompanied them, charged with the thanks of Abd-al-Rahman, and commissioned to present to the Emperor some scimetars and trinkets of the finest workmanship which the skill of the artisans of the Peninsula had been able to produce.

During the same year an ambassador of a far different character, and representing a power numerically inferior to the smallest city acknowledging the sovereignty of the Emperor of the East, but whose geographical position imparted to its advances a peculiar and weighty significance, visited Cordova upon a similar errand. The recently organized duchy of Navarre, an appanage of the Frankish empire, had grown restive under the extortions of its suzerain.

Accustomed to the largest individual liberty, the mountaineers could ill endure the exactions of irresponsible tyranny which the example of their neighbors and a delusive pretence of public advantage had insensibly imposed upon them. The bond of a common religious belief which united them with the Franks was but weak when compared with the deeply rooted national prejudice which the assumption of superiority by the vassals of Charlemagne and Louis did much to promote, and which caused the latter to be regarded with a far greater degree of execration than was entertained against the Mohammedans, the natural enemies of their country and their faith.

The Navarrese envoy, whose uncouth manners exhibited a striking contrast to the courtly graces of the Byzantine nobles, was received by the Moorish sovereign, if not with distinguished ceremony, yet with courtesy and royal hospitality. A treaty was negotiated, which assured the mountaineers of the aid of the government of Cordova, and a free passage was granted to the Moslems for any expedition whose destination lay beyond the Pyrenees. The effects of the judicious policy which dictated this alliance soon became manifest. A few months afterwards a great army, under the Counts Eblus and Asenarius, dependents of the King of Aquitaine, traversed the sierra and invaded Spain. The city of Pampeluna was taken, and, after some desultory operations yielding little profit or glory, the Franks retired in imaginary security. The defile of Roncesvalles once more became the scene of a fearful disaster; the invaders, surrounded by a host of mountaineers and Arabs, were cut to pieces, and the prisoners divided among the allies, the two counts being among those who survived the disgrace of incompetency and defeat. This military success was contemporaneous with the assertion of the independence and political organization of the principality of Navarre, which were maintained thereafter with the exception of a few years of nominal subordination to the Crown of the Asturias until its final incorporation into the dominions of France and Spain.

The catastrophe of Roncesvalles encouraged the Moors to prosecute with greater activity the operations against the Christians, whom the unsettled condition of affairs in the east and south of the Peninsula had long permitted to rest in peace. Three successive expeditions, all commanded by Obeydallah-Ibn-Abdallah, were sent to invade the enemy's country, but the campaigns were not distinguished by any important action, and the determination and well-known ferocity of the mountaineers appear to have succeeded in preventing the Moslems from inflicting any serious damage upon the hostile terrritory.

The vast system of public works inaugurated by Abd-al-Rahman, the splendor of his court, and the prodigal munificence with which he rewarded his favorites, entailed an immense expense upon the administration, and necessitated a new and oppressive burden of taxation to meet the constantly increasing demands on the treasury. The authorities, regardless of the experience of former reigns, augmented the public discontent by levying the bulk of the taxes on indispensable articles of daily consumption. The Jewish and Christian tributaries, by whom these exactions were most severely felt, were loud in their clamors, and it was not long before the Moslem population of the different cities joined in the increasing remonstrances against the arbitrary measures resulting from the unprecedented extravagance of the court. The dissatisfaction was most pronounced at Merida, and this fact having been communicated, either orally or by correspondence, by the clergy of that city to their brethren at the court of Louis, the

Frankish monarch determined to avail himself of the information in furtherance of his own designs and for the confusion of his infidel neighbors. He therefore addressed a letter to the people of Merida, professing great sympathy with them on account of the impositions of the government, exhorting them to exert their rights and regain their liberties, and promising that, in case they made an open demonstration to redress their grievances, he would march to their support across the Pyrenees. The sincerity of Louis in making this offer may well be questioned. Whether or not his tender was made in good faith is of little consequence, as his attention was immediately distracted from foreign intrigue by serious disturbances in his own dominions. A Gothic officer of rank named Aizon, having incurred the displeasure of his sovereign, fled from the court of Aix-la-Chapelle, and, betaking himself to the Gothic March, declared his enmity to the Franks, and especially to the Count of Barcelona. Through the influence of his name and nationality, aided by the habitual inconstancy of the restless adventurers who composed the frontier population and the general prejudice existing against the domination of the Franks, he soon found himself at the head of a powerful faction. Having seized the fortress of Ausona by treachery, and destroyed the town of Rosas which attempted to resist him, he sent his brother to Cordova with a request for aid, accompanied with an assurance that the disaffection was such as to warrant the hope of an easy recovery of the country by the Moslems. The appeal of Aizon was not suffered to pass unheeded. A considerable body of troops was assembled under the command of the veteran Obeydallah; the party of the malcontents increased daily in numbers and influence, and it was not long before the Count of Barcelona found himself deprived of authority over all his domain except Gerona and the city from which he derived his title.

Louis, who was then in Germany engaged in the settlement of a quarrel between two chieftains whose untamed spirits menaced the peace of the empire, had neither time nor available resources to suppress by arms an insurrection, however dangerous, in the other extremity of his dominions. But what he could not accomplish by military force he determined to attempt by negotiation, and three commissioners were accordingly appointed to persuade the colonists of the Gothic March to return to their allegiance.

The embassy, composed of a priest and two nobles, received, as might have been expected, small consideration in an age where the arts of peace were held in disrepute and the palm of popular esteem was accorded to deeds of martial heroism, and the envoys accomplished nothing. They managed, however, to widely disseminate the report that an army of Franks was about to invade the country, a rumor which so alarmed Aizon and his followers that a second appeal was sent to Cordova, and a portion of the Emir's body-guard was ordered to reinforce the allies of the Moslems without delay. The army of the Franks arrived; but the enemy had retired to Saragossa, either dreading the result of an encounter with the hardy warriors of the North, or unwilling to incur the hazard of being compelled to relinquish the valuable booty which he had so easily secured. The suspicious conduct of the generals of the Frankish army in permitting the Moslems to retreat without molestation brought upon them the reproach of treachery, an accusation which was so far sustained the following year in the National Council as to subject the culprits to the deprivation of their commands.

Abd-al-Rahman had projected an invasion of France, and the preparations were completed; the advance guard under Abd-al-Ruf—who had filled the position of vizier under Al-Hakem—was already on the way to the Pyrenees, and the Emir himself was about to depart with the main body of the army, when the unwelcome news reached him that Merida was in rebellion.

The unpopular system of taxation, already referred to, aggravated by the brutal conduct of the officials charged with its enforcement, had almost assumed the character of a persecution, while the public mind was agitated by the plausible representatives of demagogues and deluded with the hope of protection and encouragement from the powerful vassals of the Emperor. A certain Mohammed Ibn-Abd-al-Jebir, formerly a collector of the revenue, was the originator of the conspiracy. The governor, Ibn-Masfeth, saved himself by a hasty flight. The houses of the viziers were sacked, and their owners put to death or driven from the city. Mohammed appointed himself wali, seized the magazines and arsenals, and, having divided their contents among the inhabitants without distinction of creed, as a return for this act of generosity appealed to the populace to confirm him in his usurped authority. The resolution of the insurgents, sustained by the knowledge of their resources and the impregnable character of their defences, was encouraged by the arrival of fierce adventurers, who were attracted in multitudes by the prospect of rebellion and pillage. The garrison increased until it reached the number of forty thousand. No insurrection of a local character had ever presented so menacing a front to the power of the emirate. The occasion demanded the exertion of the most prompt and energetic measures. The command of Abd-al-Ruf was hastily recalled, and that officer was entrusted with the conduct of the siege. The hardened veteran carried on his operations as he would have done in an enemy's country.

The beautiful villas and gardens that surrounded the city were burned and laid waste. The growing crops were cut down. Preparations were made to carry the place by storm, which would necessarily have entailed the destruction of an immense amount of property and a massacre in which the innocent must have suffered equally with the guilty. Abd-al-Rahman, averse to an exercise of severity which threatened to weaken one of the greatest cities of the kingdom, and knowing that the unequal contest could not be long maintained, ordered Abd-al-Ruf to reduce the place by famine. A strict blockade was accordingly established. The ruffian soldiery of the garrison, cooped up within the walls, condemned to inaction and suffering for provisions, indulged their predatory inclinations by robbing and maltreating the citizens. The better class of the inhabitants, which had been induced to favor the insurrection by the expectation of compelling the withdrawal of oppressive edicts, saw, when too late, that it had exchanged a condition of comparative safety and prosperity for one of anarchy and the irresponsible despotism of armed banditti. A movement for the surrender of the city to the besiegers was quietly inaugurated by some loyal subjects of the Emir who had been forced to enlist under the banner of the rebels. Communication was opened with Abd-al-Ruf. Favored by the darkness of the night, a strong detachment was admitted; the walls were occupied, the armed mob was put to flight, the leaders escaped in the general confusion, and daybreak found the authority of Abd-al-Rahman once more established over the city of Merida. Resistance had been slight owing to the surprise, and but seven hundred rebels paid the penalty of treason. The fears of the people were soon allayel by the publication of a general amnesty, for the gentle disposition of Abd-al-Rahman revolted at the prospect of exemplary punishment for a rebellion which subsequent events demonstrated would have justified the most sanguinary retribution.

Order had scarcely been restored at Merida when it became known that the contagion of insurrection had again spread to Toledo. A renegade named Hashim, who had long in secret meditated vengeance for persecution suffered by his family under Al-Hakem, taking advantage of some trifling cause of popular discontent, raised the standard of revolt. The wali being absent, the mob, who welcomed with eagerness every occasion of opposing the authorities, found little trouble in expelling the garrison and the adherents of the Emir. Hashim, whose success had surpassed all expectations, as soon as his partisans were organized, extended his operations to the surrounding country. His following received accessions daily from the brigands who infested the mountain districts, and the floating population, always on the alert for plunder, that swarmed in the purlieus of the great cities. Mohammed-Ibn-Wasim, the wali of the frontier, having attacked the rebels, was beaten in several engagements; exulting in the promises of its citizens, Toledo maintained a successful resistance against the entire resources of the emirate, and Ommeyah, the son of Abd-al-Rahman, was forced to retire in disgrace from before its walls. At length the army of Hashim fell into an ambuscade planned by an officer who commanded a force stationed at Calatrava, the Toledans were defeated with great loss, and, soon afterwards, the city was taken by storm. Accounts vary as to the fate of Hashim, but it appears from the most reliable sources that he fell into the hands of the troops of the Emir and was beheaded without ceremony. The incapacity of the government of Cordova to deal with its domestic foes may be inferred from the duration of this outbreak, whose importance must have called forth the most vigorous attempts to suppress it, for during a period of eight years Toledo enjoyed absolute independence in the heart of a hostile monarchy. This immunity was, in some degree, due to a second insurrection which broke out in Merida while the prestige of the victorious Toledans was at its height. Mohammed, who had fled to Lisbon when the city had been taken, returned unexpectedly; having again summoned the populace to arms, he divided the contents of the magazines as before, and, calling together his outlaws, renewed the scenes of license and disorder which had formerly led to his expulsion. Abd-al-Rahman, apprized of this new disaster, raised an army of forty thousand men, of which he assumed command in person, and, arriving at the city, made several ineffectual attempts to carry it by storm. The walls, however, were too strong and too well defended to be scaled, and the besiegers were reduced to employ the more difficult operation of mining to open a breach. When all was ready, the Emir harangued the troops, reminded them that their adversaries were Moslems like themselves, and exhorted them to avoid all violence except against such as offered resistance. As a last resort, to prevent bloodshed and the lamentable consequences of an assault, Abd-al-Rahman ordered arrows to which scrolls were attached to be shot over the walls. These scrolls conveyed the information that the walls were undermined, that an attack was impending, and that an amnesty would be granted the inhabitants upon the surrender of their leaders. Some of these proclamations fell into the hands of the chiefs of the rebellion; their fears were aroused, and they lost no time in making good their escape, which they readily effected either through the negligence or the connivance of the besiegers. The damages resulting from the siege were repaired; the fortifications strengthened; the wants of the poor, who were suffering from hunger, supplied; and Merida, having for a second time experienced the extraordinary clemency of her sovereign, returned to her doubtful allegiance.

Fortunately for the Saracens, the commotion excited throughout the Frankish empire by the rebellion of the sons of Louis prevented the Christians from profiting by the misfortunes of their enemies, harassed as they themselves were by the revolt of great capitals and the growing disaffection of the people.

The disturbances once quelled and the country apparently at peace, the pious and ambitious spirit of Abd-al-Rahman, actuated by motives entertained since the day of his accession, induced him to pursue the traditional policy of Islam and inaugurate a campaign against the infidel. Expeditions were despatched into Galicia and the Gothic March, which were generally successful, but which exhibited only the grievous and transitory effects of predatory warfare, despite the accounts of monkish chroniclers, whose love of the marvellous has embellished their pages with accounts of great victories and miraculous events recorded with all the circumstantial minuteness which not infrequently characterizes these narratives. The fleet of the emirate, which had no rival on the Mediterranean, co-operated with its armies, and, landing a detachment on the coast of France, overran the country and plundered the suburbs of Marseilles.

The martial enterprise and increasing arrogance of the Khalifate of Bagdad, which had stripped the Byzantine Empire of its possessions in Asia Minor and had frequently threatened Constantinople itself, led the Emperor Theophilus to imitate the example of his predecessor and solicit the aid of the Emirate of Spain, whose power had attained a greater reputation in the East than was warranted either by the character of its population, the stability of its civil institutions, or the extent of its military resources. The result of this embassy corresponded with that of the one sent by Michael the Stammerer. The envoys were received and dismissed with honor; costly gifts were exchanged between the two sovereigns; and the most flattering promises of assistance were given by Abd-al-Rahman contingent on the security of his own dominions, whose fulfilment was prevented, however, by the incessant agitation of domestic foes and the apprehension of foreign invasion. The measures of the Byzantine court were counteracted by the political intrigues of the Abbasides, who maintained a close alliance with the Franks; lavished upon the semi-barbaric monarchs of the Rhine the curiosities and luxuries of the Orient; and, in the treaties with their Christian auxiliaries, stigmatized the Ommeyades as schismatics, blasphemers, and traitors, objects of abhorrence to orthodox Moslems and entitled to no consideration from an adversary.

The hopes of relief entertained by the Greeks, sufficiently unpromising before, were now rendered entirely vain by the appearance of a strange and terrible enemy, who descended like a destructive tempest upon the coast of Lusitania. The Normans, a branch of the Germanic race, whose origin was identical with that of the Franks, but who cherished the most uncompromising hostility towards the latter on account of their conversion to Christianity, had, for half a century, been the terror of the maritime countries of Northern Europe. Inhabiting the bleak and inhospitable coasts of Scandinavia, instinct and necessity had early taught them the science of navigation, and experience had shown the facility by which the richest spoils might be wrested from the less warlike nations of the South. Their boats were of the rudest type, of small dimensions, constructed of osier and hides, propelled by oars and sails of skins, yet such was the daring of these sailors that they did not hesitate to encounter in their frail vessels, during the most inclement seasons, the storms of the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay. They had already carried their terrible inroads far into the most accessible provinces of England and France. The swiftness of their movements, their frightful aspect, and the ferocity of their manners imparted to their incursions the character of a visitation of incarnate demons. The votaries of the savage Woden, the Teutonic God of War, they seemed totally deficient in the attributes of humanity and mercy. More ruthless than other barbarians, the infirmities of age, the helplessness of sex, received no indulgence at their hands. Women, children, and old men were butchered with the same relentless animosity as the warrior disabled in the field of battle. They took no prisoners. All animals that they encountered were killed. Their brutal natures were displayed even in their amusements; and, amidst the drunken orgies of their festivals, their gods were pledged in draughts of mead quaffed from the skulls of slaughtered enemies. Their lofty stature and gigantic strength; their adventurous spirit, which carried them across seas where experienced mariners scarcely dared to venture; their courage, which inspired them to contend with tenfold odds, combined to increase the terror derived from their sudden appearance and mysterious origin. They had infested the shores of England during the last years of the preceding century. Encouraged by success and tempted by the prospect of booty, their expeditions had alarmed the provinces of Western France during the reign of Charlemagne, and had desolated a region where their descendants were destined to found a principality to which they gave their name, and with whose fortunes, in after times, were associated, in no small degree, the social organization, the laws, the glories, and the misfortunes of the people of Great Britain. They had at first effected a landing on the coast of the Asturias, whence they soon retired, prompted to this step rather by the poverty of the country, which held out no inducements to their avarice, than through any apprehension from the well-known prowess of its defenders. Not long after this, a fleet of fifty-four Norman vessels swept down upon the shores of Lusitania. The environs of the city of Lisbon experienced the full effects of the destructive instincts of these enemies of mankind. Expelled by the uprising of the population of the neighborhood, they sailed around the Peninsula; extended their depredations to the coast of Africa; plundered Cadiz, and finally entered the Guadalquivir. Ascending that stream, they occupied and sacked the suburbs of Seville, whose inhabitants had fled at the first intelligence of their approach. In their encounters with the troops of Abd-al-Rahman, the pirates had in almost every instance a decided advantage; but news having reached them that a fleet of fifteen vessels, supported by a powerful army, was preparing to intercept their retreat, they hastily set sail and effected their escape with insignificant loss. The facility with which these ferocious adventurers had penetrated into his dominions, and the damage inflicted by their pitiless hostility, convinced the Emir of the necessity of increasing his naval power, the only effectual means of protecting the vulnerable points of his kingdom and of preventing the recurrence of such a calamity. Vessels were accordingly constructed in the dockyards of the Mediterranean; watch-towers were erected at frequent intervals; a system of signals and posts was established; and the coast defences in each military district were placed in charge of an experienced officer, with whose command the naval forces were directed to co-operate. The wisdom of these precautions was soon demonstrated, and the Normans, warned by the formidable preparations everywhere in readiness to oppose their landing, ceased to seriously molest the shores of the Peninsula.

In the division of the vast and unwieldy empire of Charlemagne, which scarcely preserved its original boundaries until the second generation, France and the Gothic March fell to the share of Charles the Bald, the eldest son of the weak and amiable Louis. The discord which had arisen between Frankish and Gothic aspirants to power in the fief that the foresight of the Emperor had founded beyond the Pyrenees, grew more bitter with the progress of time and the infliction of mutual injury. The intrigues of Count Bernhart, formerly chamberlain at the court of Aix-la-Chapelle, who represented the national party against the Frankish usurpation, were principally responsible for the manifestation of the independent spirit which not infrequently ignored the rights of the foreign suzerain, and even maintained amicable relations with the infidels of Cordova. Charles, aware of the intrepid character of his secret enemy whose popularity made him still more dangerous, inveigled him into his power by flattering promises of favor and promotion; and, as the unsuspecting victim bent the knee before his master, the latter stabbed him with his own hand. The enormity of the deed was aggravated by the horrible suspicion of parricide, as popular opinion, based upon his former intimacy with the Empress Judith, had long ascribed to Count Bernhart the paternity of the Frankish sovereign.

This act of perfidy, so far from appeasing the discontent that pervaded the turbulent society of the

Gothic March, contributed greatly to its encouragement. The populace, as well as the nobles, whose opinions had changed, and who now regarded Bernhart as the champion of their liberties instead of an intruder, were thoroughly exasperated. The country became a prey to anarchy, where the rule of the strongest prevailed. This favorable opportunity, aided perhaps by suggestions of sympathizers with the government of Cordova and individuals who had suffered from the rapacity of the feudal lords, invited another invasion by the Saracens. The land was again devastated. Barcelona was delivered to the troops of the Emir through the connivance of the Jews, whose trade was seriously affected by the interminable disputes and broils which had interrupted foreign communications and shaken public confidence. The Moslem occupation of the Gothic March, like others that had preceded it, was, however, but temporary. The walis of the border cities, to all intents and purposes paramount, were often united by the closest ties of interest with the Counts of Barcelona, and therefore thwarted every attempt at the recovery of the Gothic territory by the emirs as having a tendency to ultimately curtail their privileges and diminish their power. The existence of a foreign nation within the borders of the emirate, which could be at once appealed to for support in case of an attempt by the court of Cordova to enforce its authority, was a practical guarantee of independence.

The closing years of the reign of Abd-al-Rahman were clouded by a persecution of the Christians provoked by the obstinacy and presumption of aggressive fanatics who violated the laws, profaned the mosques, and insulted the memory of Mohammed through an insane desire for notoriety and martyrdom. The most severe punishments as well as the most noble clemency failed alike to suppress this new and increasing disorder. The nature of the Emir, always averse to cruelty, hesitated to inflict the penalties imperatively demanded by the outraged feelings of all true believers. Deeply affected by the troubles which oppressed his kingdom and cast a shadow over his domestic life, his health became impaired, and he died suddenly of apoplexy in the year 822, at the age of sixty years.

The luxurious tastes and the love of pomp, which were prominent traits in the character of Abd-al-Rahman, produced greater changes in the social and political aspect of the court of Cordova than had been known under his predecessors. He was the first of the Moslem rulers of Spain in whose robes were interwoven the royal cipher and the device selected by the monarch at his accession. He assumed a dignity and a mystery in his demeanor that had heretofore been the peculiar attributes of the despotisms of the Orient. Habitually secluded from the eyes of his subjects, he never went abroad without a veil, which effectually concealed his features from the public gaze. He increased the body-guard, formed by his father, and spared no expense in securing its devotion and perfecting its equipment. He established a mint in Cordova, and greatly improved the coinage, both in the purity of the metal and the elegance of the inscriptions. Under his supervision two sides of the courtyard of the Mosque were enclosed with beautiful peristyles, corresponding with the finish and decorations of the interior. He added to the magnificence of the capital by the construction of public baths and fountains, fed by leaden pipes, through which were conducted into every quarter of the city the crystal waters of the Sierra Morena. The demands of religion and piety were gratified by the foundation and endowment of innumerable mosques, whose materials were composed of costly woods, variegated jasper, and exquisite marbles, and to each of these houses of worship was attached either a school or a hospital. Upon the banks of the Guadalquivir stretched an endless series of gardens devoted to the recreation of the people, and within whose delightful precincts were displayed all the resources of the picturesque horticulture of the Orient. Abd-al-Rahman rivalled the most enlightened khalifs of the East in his zeal for the encouragement of learning; in his patronage of science and the arts; in his admiration for the works of the Greek philosophers, which, during his reign, were introduced into the Peninsula. One of his greatest pleasures was to listen to the reading of the productions of the great scholars of antiquity. In every town schools sufficient to meet the requirements of the population, and provided with the best available facilities for the imparting of instruction, arose. All children whom misfortune had left destitute were cared for in charitable institutions maintained by the government.

The system of highways, a precious heritage of the Cæsars, was diligently inspected; the roads which had fallen into decay were repaired; new ones were projected and completed; and the means of intercommunication with the most remote provinces of the emirate brought to a degree of perfection unknown even in the most flourishing days of the Roman Empire. Many of these great works were undertaken to relieve the universal distress induced by national calamities. A withering drought had destroyed the crops and swept away the flocks and herds in Andalusia. Swarms of locusts then settled over the land, and turned the once smiling landscape into a desert. Unable to sustain life, multitudes of the starving peasantry emigrated to Africa, where they found an hospitable welcome and abundance of food to supply their necessities. To the poor who remained, the customary taxes were remitted and regular employment given, the expense being met by disbursements from the private purse of the Emir. The public granaries and magazines were opened, and supplies distributed to the helpless and unfortunate. Thus, by the encouragement of industry, the promotion of important public improvements throughout the country, and the embellishment of the city of Cordova and its environs, the mournful consequences incident to inevitable public disasters were largely averted, and the very events which, at first sight, seemed to threaten the life of the nation were, through the beneficence and wisdom of a great monarch, made to contribute to its profit and permanent advantage.

The kindness and generosity of Abd-al-Rahman at times degenerated into weakness, which made him the facile victim of the occupants of his household and his harem. Constitutionally averse to any display of severity, acts of insubordination and dishonesty were suffered, in his very presence, to pass without a reprimand. A passion for music, which dominated his very being, made him the munificent patron of every minstrel, whose influence at court was usually proportionate to his talents as a singer or as a performer on the lute. A famous musician named Ziryab, whom Al-Hakem had invited from Bagdad but who arrived too late to enjoy the favor of his royal host, was received by his successor with honors worthy of the ambassadors of the greatest princes. The walis of the cities through which he was to pass on his way to Cordova were directed to extend to him every courtesy; he was furnished with an escort, and his retinue was increased by a number of eunuchs with whom the Emir had presented him. A magnificent residence was assigned to him in the capital. His pension amounted to the annual sum of forty thousand pieces of gold, derived from one of the most valuable estates of the kingdom. Ziryab, while distinguished for his musical talents, was also one of the most profound scholars of his time. His wonderful memory retained without difficulty the words and airs of ten thousand different songs. The pupil of the most eminent doctors of the East, he was equally well versed in the sciences of history, geography, philosophy, and medicine. So versatile were his talents and so varied his accomplishments, that not only the populace, but even learned writers, gravely attributed the achievements of his extraordinary intellectual powers to communion with the genii. His extensive acquirements made him the chosen companion of Abd-al-Rahman, who delighted in his conversation; and, while the power of the favorite over his master was unbounded, it must be said to his credit that it was never abused or exerted for any base or mercenary purposes. His exquisite taste and dignified courtesy were not long in producing an impression upon the society of Andalusia. The manners of the people insensibly grew refined and elegant. Customs savoring of the barbaric life of the Desert, which the stubborn persistence of the Arab and Berber natures had retained through many generations, were by degrees abandoned. The prolific genius of this wonderfully gifted personage prescribed different modes of dress, adapted to the changing seasons; improved regulations in the diplomatic service; innovations in the methods of private entertainments; dignified and urbane laws for formal and social intercourse. It revealed the valuable character of plants and vegetables whose names were familiar to the Spanish Arabs, but whose uses as food, or whose medicinal virtues, had hitherto remained unknown. It added a fifth string to the lute, thereby greatly increasing the compass and harmony of that instrument. It bestowed upon the toilets of the harem harmless and refreshing perfumes and cosmetics. It supplied the banquets of the rich with savory dishes, worthy of the most fastidious epicure, some of which bear to this day the name of their inventor. It devised means for increasing the comfort and cleanliness of the poor. It suggested sanitary arrangements which might promote the healthfulness of great cities by an improved system of drainage. The wit of Ziryab which delighted the court was not inferior to his learning, nor to the wonderful ingenuity which applied to the various concerns of life the valuable principles of practical philosophy. His epigrams are still repeated as proverbs by the Mohammedans of Africa. His skill in the art of improvisation was phenomenal. A couplet appropriate to every occasion, a witticism in rhyme which enlivened the most ordinary discourse, were never wanting to his ready and active intellect. His mental powers were unconsciously employed while those of others slumbered, and he not infrequently aroused his female slaves in the middle of the night in order to seize and memorize the harmonious creations of his tireless brain. The creed of the Moslem peremptorily forbids the adoration of its heroes, but the justice of humanity has immortalized the name of Ziryab by transmitting it to after-ages in the same category with those of its most illustrious philosophers, and has thus indemnified itself for the privation of a useful custom which would elsewhere have honored the object of its admiration and gratitude with splendid statues of bronze and marble, and with an eternal abiding-place in both the visible and invisible heavens.

The intercession of Ziryab with his royal master, whose mind was absolutely dominated by the brilliant talents and courtly graces of his favorite, was often invoked by applicants for pecuniary emoluments and official distinction, but generally in vain. The hazardous game of politics offered no allurements to the polished and dainty epicurean. Secure in the possession of wealth and fame, he cheerfully abandoned the intrigues, the vexations, and the dangers of political life to another personage whose abilities, in their peculiar sphere, not inferior to his own, bore the stamp of a dark and sinister character.

The ambition of the faqui Yahya-Ibn-Yahya, the leader of the revolt of the southern suburb of Cordova, which caused the depopulation of one-fifth of the area of the capital and the expatriation of twenty thousand industrious subjects of the emirate, has already been mentioned in these pages. The nationality of this fanatic, and the address which he displayed in excusing his crimes, had, strangely enough, exempted him from the punishment he merited. Having regained, to a certain extent, the favor of the proud and arbitrary Al-Hakem, whose inclinations were never to the side of mercy, he had obtained a singular ascendant over the mind of the more pliable Abd-al-Rahman. Instructed by experience that open opposition to the constituted authority was not the surest method of attaining to distinction, he changed his tactics; courted the approbation of the monarch by subservience and flattery, varied at times by fits of insolence, which were overlooked as eccentricities or manifestations of righteous indignation provoked by the depravity of mankind; and, while he appeared to figure only as an occasional adviser of the Emir, he in reality engrossed the entire political and judicial power of the State. His ostentatious humility procured for him the reverent esteem of the populace. The superiority of his intellect and his vast attainments were tacitly acknowledged by the learned. The prestige he had acquired as the founder of the Malikites in Spain made him the oracle of every student and doctor of theology. It was by means of this latter distinction that he was enabled to immeasurably extend and confirm his influence. Ambitious men soon perceived that the great civil dignitaries of the realm—the chief kadis and the subordinate officials of the courts of judicature—were invariably selected from the fashionable sect, and were individuals who stood highest in Yahya's favor. As a natural consequence, the popularity of the doctrines of Malik-Ibn-Anas increased daily, and the adherents of the Medinese sage, in a few years, outnumbered all other sectaries combined. The policy of Yahya led him to decline the exercise of all official employments, an example of self-denial which, while it served to disguise his ambition, greatly strengthened his authority. In the exalted sphere in which he moved his power was autocratic. He imposed degrading penances upon his sovereign, who performed them with patience and humility. He exacted from the people those outward signs of reverence which superstition is accustomed to accord to the favorites of heaven and which are but one degree below idolatry. The ecclesiastical affairs of the Peninsula were absolutely subject to his control. He dictated the most important decisions emanating from the courts of justice; and, when a magistrate ventured to assert his independence by the promulgation of an opinion which had not been approved by the arrogant faqui, he at once received a slip of paper on which was written the single word, "Resign!"

The plastic nature of Abd-al-Rahman, utilized for the profit of a musician and a religious impostor, also exposed him to the artifices of a petulant and selfish woman. An ardent temperament rendered him peculiarly susceptible to the attractions of the sex. Among the numerous beauties of his harem was one named Tarub, who was equally dominated by the absorbing passions of ambition and avarice. Infatuated with her charms and beguiled by her caresses, the Emir became her slave. His prodigal generosity towards this unworthy favorite, which threatened to deplete the treasury, frequently, but in vain, elicited the remonstrances of his councillors. On one occasion her blandishments induced him to present her with a necklace valued at a hundred thousand dinars. On another, she refused to open her door until it had been entirely concealed by bags of money heaped up against it. Utterly destitute of affection or gratitude, she endeavored to perpetuate her influence by a crime which reveals the incredible cruelty and infamy of her character. Of the forty-five sons of Abd-al-Rahman, the eldest, Mohammed, had been selected by his father to succeed him. Tarub, who had employed all her arts, but without success, to obtain the crown for her own son, Abdallah, now determined to secure by murder what her powers of persuasion had failed to accomplish. The services of the eunuch Nassir, who exercised the office of chamberlain, was devoted to the interests of his mistress, and bore no good-will to the Emir, were employed in this emergency. Nassir was of Spanish origin, hated the sect of his ancestors with peculiar animosity, and had been the willing instrument of the recent persecution which the mistaken policy of the government had deemed it necessary to inflict upon the Christians. Under the direction of Tarub, the eunuch paid a visit to Harrani, a distinguished Syrian physician, who had recently begun the practice of his profession at Cordova. Nassir, having assured Harrani of his esteem and hinted that the conferring of the favor he was about to ask would enure to his future advantage, presented him with a purse containing a thousand pieces of gold, and requested him to have ready by a certain day a quantity of one of the most deadly poisons known to science.

The natural acuteness of the physician, increased by long experience in the sinister transactions of courts, was at no loss to detect the object for which these preparations were intended. The character of the perfidious Tarub and her inordinate ambition were, moreover, no secret in Cordova; but, while the politic Harrani had no desire to, even by implication, connive at the death of the Emir, he was equally averse to compromise his prospects and imperil his own safety by openly denouncing the eunuch, whose friends would not fail to avenge the betrayal of his treason. He therefore caused a warning to be secretly conveyed to Abd-al-Rahman not to taste anything offered him by the chamberlain. The declining health of the monarch favored the designs of the conspirators, and the eunuch seized the first opportunity to recommend, with every expression of solicitude, the poison to his master as a potent remedy which he had procured from a famous practitioner. The Emir, upon whom the warning of Harrani had not been lost, and who seemed to the attendants to be merely adopting a salutary and not unusual precaution, directed the eunuch to drink some of the potion himself. Unable to refuse, Nassir swallowed a part of the contents of the phial. Then, withdrawing from the royal presence, he sought in terror the aid of the physician. An antidote was promptly administered, but the poison had done its work, and, the victim of his own perfidiousness, Nassir expired in horrible agony.

The enfeebled constitution of Abd-al-Rahman was unable to sustain the revelation of the malice and dishonor of those whom he loved and trusted; and the amiable monarch who had not, by many years, reached the allotted term of human life, a few weeks after the exposure of the conspiracy followed his chamberlain to the grave.

The jealousy of the Ommeyades, following the example of the Khalifs of Damascus, early introduced into their dominions the employment of eunuchs, and these creatures almost immediately assumed and exercised a secret, but none the less dangerous, power in the administration of the government as well as in the intrigues and plots of the harem. Their mutilation, which, according to common belief, was presumed to insure absolute fidelity to their masters' interests, made them the enemies of the human race. An insatiable thirst for gold, a vindictiveness only to be appeased by the destruction of the objects of their displeasure, had supplanted in their breasts those sentiments of natural affection which had been forever eradicated by the barbarity of man. The confidants and constant associates of the sultanas, they became the tools of every conspiracy, and not infrequently the originators of measures involving the most important political consequences.

The support of these vile instruments, indispensable to the designs of criminal ambition, had been already secured by the Princess Tarub, whose rapacity had, for once, yielded to her greed for power. Undismayed by the fate of Nassir, and ignoring the suspicions aroused by his sudden death, she, by every artifice at her command, by promises of future favors and concessions and by a prodigal liberality, had enrolled among her partisans the potent and unscrupulous guardians of the harem.

The careless Abd-al-Rahman, whose condition had not warranted any expectation of his untimely end, had neglected to officially designate his successor to the throne. His choice, however, was well known to have been fixed upon his eldest son, Mohammed, a cold, sordid, narrow-minded, but able prince; penurious to a degree unprecedented among youths of royal lineage, but of large experience in the arts of war and government, and of unquestioned orthodoxy. Abdallah, on the other hand, was a devotee of pleasure. His palace was nightly the scene of boisterous revels, that were protracted until long after sunrise. He shunned all serious occupations. His intimate friends were debauchees and parasites, whose conversation was seasoned with licentious jests which did not spare either the officials of state or the ministers of religion. Rarely was he seen to enter the door of the mosque, or to assist at the ceremonies of public worship. Despised by the populace and abhorred by the devout, his pre-eminent unfitness for the responsibilities of empire was also recognized by the eunuchs, whom nothing but the prodigality of his mother could ever have induced to espouse his cause. Abu-al-Mofrih, one of the former, who possessed great influence among his fellows, determined, with the proverbial inconstancy of his kind, to gratify his malice and provide for the future by the commission of a double treason. The heterodox opinions of Abdallah afforded a plausible excuse for the perfecting of his scheme. By constant insinuations of the dangers to which the emirate would be exposed if he were raised to power, and by descanting with pious horror upon the sacrilegious life of that profligate prince, he excited apprehensions in the minds of the eunuchs that their own interests might be seriously endangered by a ruler whose previous career had been directed by unbelievers and by persons who had frequently evinced marked contempt for their order. The harshness and notorious parsimony of Mohammed were at first declared by the eunuchs to render him ineligible; serious impediments to success, indeed, in a court governed to a great extent by the soft influences of the seraglio and by the unsparing use of gold. The objections were soon answered by the wily Abu-al-Mofrih, whose experience and reputation gave him a right to take the lead in a project demanding courage and tact, and it was quietly understood that Mohammed was the candidate for whom the empire was reserved. The death of Abd-al-Rahman occurred after midnight. According to Oriental custom, the gates of the palace—which was walled and moated like a castle—were closed, and no one was permitted to leave or enter without satisfactory explanation of his errand and proof of his identity. By a time-honored practice that prescriptive usage had confirmed as legal, the prince who first after the monarch's death obtained possession of the royal residence was considered to have the presumptive right to the crown. Sadun, a eunuch, who had reluctantly assented to the rejection of Abdallah, but who had lately become a firm partisan of his brother, was selected to inform Mohammed of his good fortune. The villa of the latter was on the opposite bank of the Guadalquivir, and the eunuch, providing himself with the keys of the city gate, which opened upon the bridge, traversed the silent streets until he reached the palace of Abdallah, in front of which he was forced to pass. The halls were aglow with light and the noise of drunken revelry rang upon the air, as the muffled figure of the eunuch glided stealthily by the portals on its mysterious errand. Mohammed, summoned from the bath, received the message with surprise and incredulity. Even the production of his father's signet, which Sadun exhibited as a token of good faith, was not sufficient to convince him. Regarding the eunuch as an executioner sent by Abdallah to take away his life, he abjectly implored the mercy of the messenger, who, so far from intending injury, had been deputed to tender him a crown. The protestations of Sadun finally prevailed, and the steward of Mohammed's household was called to assist in devising means to enter the royal palace, an indispensable preliminary to success. His suggestion to apply to the governor of the city was adopted, but that cautious functionary declined to compromise himself by countenancing an enterprise whose issue was so hazardous. The night was fast passing away, and it was evident that something must be done quickly, as dawn would bring discovery, and perhaps death, to all concerned. Again the fertile invention of the steward, Ibn-Musa, came to the aid of his master in his deep perplexity. "Thou knowest, O my Lord," said he, "that I have often conducted thy daughter to the royal palace. Disguise thyself at once in her garments, and God willing we shall pass the guards." The advice being approved, Mohammed was speedily enveloped in the veil and flowing robes of the inmates of the harem and mounted upon an ass. The animal was led by the steward, Sadun marching in front; the sentinels were passed without difficulty; but the wary eunuch, fearful of being followed, directed Ibn-Musa to remain near Abdallah's mansion, while he conducted the prince alone. Arriving at the palace, the knock of Sadun was answered by the porter, an old man who had long served the emirs in that responsible capacity. Peering cautiously through the postern and recognizing the eunuch, he exclaimed, "Whom have you there, O Sadun?" The latter responded, "The daughter of our prince Mohammed; make haste and admit us!" Smiling, as he suspiciously examined the lofty stature and ample proportions of the supposed damsel, the porter rejoined, "Verily, O Sadun, the lady has grown to almost twice her size since she was here a few days since; let her raise her veil that I may see her face." The eunuch demurred; but the porter threatening to withdraw, Mohammed himself lifted the veil, and disclosed to the astonished gaze of the porter the well-known features of the eldest son of Abd-al-Rahman. "My father is dead," said the prince, "and I have come to take possession of the palace." "I do not doubt thy word," replied the porter, "but mine own eyes must convince me of the truth of thy statement before I can admit thee." "Then come at once," exclaimed Sadun, and, leaving Mohammed in the street, the eunuch led the way to the death-chamber of the Emir. "I am satisfied," said the faithful servitor, bursting into tears, and returning, he opened the gate and kissed the hand of the prince with every protestation of loyalty and obedience. The household was aroused; the officials of state were summoned in haste to the palace, and required to swear allegiance to the new sovereign; and thus, through the address of a handful of eunuchs, who dispensed with equal alacrity the penalties of hatred and the offices of friendship, a serious revolution was averted, and a turn given to national affairs that permanently influenced the future of the Saracen empire.

The first acts of Mohammed after his accession gave undoubted proof of his zeal, and elicited the enthusiastic applause of the theologians, who henceforth became his most devoted subjects. Every official and every public servant who was even suspected of a leaning towards Christianity was discharged without ceremony, and their places were filled with Mussulmans of the most pronounced orthodoxy. The law which forbade the erection or the enlargement of churches—a fundamental article of the convention of Musa—had been to a great extent ignored by the emirs, even under the aggravation of treason and conspiracy; and, as a consequence of this indulgence, new places of worship had arisen in those localities where an increasing Christian population required greater facilities for the services of its religion. By a sweeping edict, Mohammed directed every church and chapel built since the invasion of

Tarik to be razed to the ground. The officers who were charged with the execution of this order, more zealous for their faith than solicitous for the honor of their sovereign, waged indiscriminate destruction against all edifices set apart by the Christians for sacred uses, regardless of the sanctity of their traditions or the date of their foundation. A persecution, encouraged by the faquis, was also inaugurated against the obstinate sectaries, who continued to solicit with so much ardor the crown of martyrdom, in comparison with which the severity of Abd-al-Rahman assumed the appearance of moderation. The evidence of the Fathers of the Church, so suspicious in regard to all that reflects upon the credit of their profession or decries the triumphs of their enemies, may perhaps be received to confirm the statement of the Arabs that an immense number of Christians, alarmed by the tortures inflicted upon their fellow-communicants, yielded to temptation and apostatized.

But it was not among the infidels alone that it was found necessary to invoke the intervention of the sovereign authority. In the bosom of Islam, a serious dispute had arisen concerning the interpretation of the Koran and the settlement of certain controverted points of doctrine that, in their theological importance and general relation to the Faith, bore no proportion whatever to the virulent animosity exhibited by their several advocates. As the Ommeyades of Spain had early arrogated to themselves, without exception, the functions and privileges of the exalted office of khalif, in which were united the most despotic powers of Church and State, Mohammed, whose discrimination showed him the necessity of deciding this religious controversy before its champions appealed to arms, asserted his prerogative by ordering the rival doctors to respectively plead their cause in his presence. The arguments were heard, and the Malikites, whose prosperity under the former reign had greatly increased their pride and insolence, sustained a signal defeat in their attempt to refute the doctrines of the Hanbalites, their adversaries. With a liberality not to be expected in a ruler whom posterity, perhaps not without injustice, has agreed to stigmatize with the name of bigot, Mohammed decided that the objections urged against the creed of the Hanbalites as preached by Al-Baki, the leader of that sect, were frivolous, and that its tenets were neither based upon misinterpretation of the texts of the Koran nor antagonistic to the generally received tradition.

With the double object of diverting the minds of his subjects from theological disputes and projects of sedition and to repress the encroaching spirit of the Christian princes of the North, whose conquests were making serious inroads on the Moslem territory, Mohammed proclaimed the Holy War, the forces destined for this purpose being placed under the command of the walis of Merida and Saragossa. The Gothic March once more underwent the frightful evils of invasion, and the Saracen army again penetrated the enemy's country to the very walls of Narbonne. The wali of Saragossa, Musa-Ibn-Zeyad, entrusted with the conduct of the campaign against the King of the Asturias, after some unimportant successes in Galicia, was defeated with great loss at Albeyda, which town, having been taken by King Ordoño, and the Arab garrison massacred, was abandoned to the tender mercies of the barbarous soldiery.

The populace of Toledo, whose implacable hatred of its Saracen masters no exhibition of clemency could diminish and no example of severity intimidate, having learned of the persecution of their Christian brethren at Cordova, and apprehensive lest the zealous efforts of the faquis—whose influence at that time dominated the policy of the government—might be extended to their own city, organized a revolt, seized the Arab governor, and demanded of the Emir in exchange for that official the hostages whom they had given to Abd-al-Rahman II. as security for their loyalty and good behavior. With a weakness that formed no part of his character, and for which no historical account affords an explanation, Mohammed acquiesced. The fierce Toledans then began to carry on war in earnest. Accustomed from childhood to the use of arms and the exposure of a military life, they repeatedly proved more than a match for the disciplined veterans of the emirate. They drove out the garrison of Calatrava and demolished its walls. Then, suddenly traversing the passes of the Sierra Morena, they surprised at Andujar a detachment of the royal forces sent to attack them, captured its baggage, and plundered its camp. Never before in the history of Toledan rebellions had the insurgents ventured so near the capital. The Emir keenly felt the insult to his dignity, and, at the head of all the troops he could collect in such an emergency, advanced to punish the rebels. The latter retired, and their leader, Sindola, whose name indicates his Gothic descent, sent an envoy to the King of the Asturias for aid. The Christian prince, perceiving at a glance the extraordinary benefits which would result from an alliance with a powerful faction in the heart of the Moslem dominions, responded at once to the appeal with a strong body of veterans, who succeeded in entering the city before the arrival of Mohammed.

The strength of the walls and the prowess of the garrison forbade the hope of a successful assault, and induced Mohammed to have recourse to a stratagem worthy of the cunning and astuteness of an Arab. Concealing his troops in the ravine traversed by the Guadacelete, he appeared before Toledo with a squadron of cavalry and made preparations to encamp.

The rebels, seeing what was apparently an excellent opportunity to cut off this vanguard before the arrival of the main body, made a sally, and, before they were aware of their danger, were drawn into the trap laid for them and surrounded. Dreadful carnage followed; but few escaped, and a ghastly heap of eight thousand heads, collected in the field of battle, attested the animosity of the victors and the misfortune of the vanquished. These sinister trophies, ranged along the battlements of Cordova and other Andalusian cities, were long an admonition to traitors of the terrible lesson that the Toledans and their infidel allies had received on the banks of the Guadacelete. The great loss sustained by the insurgents,—amounting to twenty thousand, for only the Christians and such Mussulman leaders as were killed or taken prisoners were decapitated,—so far from crushing the obstinate spirit of the inhabitants of the imperial city of the Visigoths, only served to increase their fury and confirm their resolution. Their offensive operations were, however, effectually checked. The garrison, reduced to less than one-third of its number, was forced to remain inactive behind the fortifications. It was with mingled feelings of rage and despair that the industrious as well as the wealthy part of the population, whose possessions had hitherto been respected in the hope of timely submission, beheld the desolation of their gardens, the uprooting of their vineyards, the burning of their villas,—those evidences of prosperity and luxury that embellished for many a mile the banks of the famous Tagus. Their thoughts were further embittered by the consciousness that these ravages were not inflicted through any fault of theirs, but through the turbulence and ill-directed ambition of Jews and renegades, whose numbers were swelled by a crowd of vagabonds and criminals attracted by the evil reputation of the city, the worst elements of a lawless population, the refuse of a score of great communities. An additional advantage gained by the troops of Mohammed served to still further depress the spirits of the Toledans, although no disaster seemed sufficient to impel them to a voluntary return to their allegiance. The principal bridge that gave access to the city was secretly mined. An attack was then made on one of the gates; the assailants retired in apparent disorder; the besieged pursued; and, at the proper instant, the wooden supports were removed from the piers, and the whole structure, crowded with the soldiers of the enemy, was precipitated into the waters of the Tagus. Not an individual escaped, for such as were able to save themselves from the rapid current of the river were shot by the archers of the Emir, stationed on the banks for that purpose. These repeated misfortunes impressed the Toledans with the necessity of peace. Their valor and their constancy under the most discouraging circumstances, although exhibited in an evil cause, cannot but excite the admiration of every reader. For the long period of twenty years Mohammed made incessant but vain attempts to subdue them. They defied the utmost efforts of his power. They menaced him in his very capital. They routed his armies, often commanded by princes of the blood. They dismantled his strongholds. The most overwhelming reverses only nerved them to greater exertions. Great losses in the field, the tortures of famine, the murmurs of their disaffected townsmen, could not shake their determination or excite their fears. The attempts to storm their fortifications were repulsed with heroic courage. Their decimated ranks were recruited from the sturdy mountaineers of Leon and the Asturias. It is in vain that the modern historian searches for the motives that inspired and sustained this sentiment of independence, this habitual defiance of authority. The ancient

Gothic spirit was not sufficient to account for such an anomalous condition of affairs, although the Christians greatly outnumbered the members of all other sects. There existed no unity of religious feeling which might actuate zealots to deeds of self-sacrifice and martyrdom. The population of Toledo is represented by all writers as a remarkably heterogeneous one. The Christians mention it freely with contempt. The Moslems, without exception, allude to it as a faithless and turbulent rabble. The reason for the suicidal policy that neglected to demolish the fortifications of this centre of sedition, and did not resort to the drastic measure of wholesale expatriation when milder means had repeatedly failed, also remains a mystery. It required no great degree of statesmanship to perceive the inevitable consequences of the irrepressible spirit of rebellion encouraged, as it was, by the ill-timed clemency and indulgence of the sovereign. At length, emboldened by their alliance with the Christians of the North, and taking advantage of the embarrassments of their antagonist, harassed by enemies at home and abroad, they extorted from the Emir a treaty which virtually conceded their independence. It allowed them to select their own magistrates, including the governor, and to regulate without interference their municipal and ecclesiastical affairs. Toledo, by the payment of an annual tribute, was thus placed upon the same political footing as that of a province recently subjected to the arms of Islam, and must henceforth, for many years, cease to be regarded as an integral part of the Moorish empire.

In the meantime, the example of Toledo had been followed by other cities, whose inhabitants, exasperated by their grievances and instigated by the ambition of daring chieftains, kept the country in continued disorder and exercised to the utmost the energy and abilities of Mohammed. The evil consequences of that pernicious system, peculiar to the Arabs, of entrusting important commands to renegades without previous satisfactory tests of their fidelity, were once more demonstrated. Musa-Ibn-Zeyad, who traced his descent from the branch of the Visigothic nobility known to the Arabs as the Beni-Kasi, and whom we have seen defeated at Albeyda, was soon afterwards, through the intrigues of fanatical courtiers who accused him of treason, removed from his post of wali of Saragossa and disgraced. This officer, whose military talents and political capacity were far above the average, seeing all avenues for promotion under the emirate closed, and keenly feeling the injustice of the treatment he had received, proceeded at once to organize an insurrection, an easy matter among the adventurers of the frontier naturally prone to inconstancy and insubordination. Popular among his subjects, almost the entire province of which Saragossa was the capital declared for his cause. Tudela, Huesca, Toledo, solicited his alliance. Having baffled the efforts of the Emir to crush him, he transmitted his authority to his son Musa. The latter, securing the friendship and support of the Navarrese, crossed the Pyrenees, and carried fire and sword into Southern France. His success was so remarkable, and the resources of the French monarchy were so inadequate to resist the progress of this enterprising partisan, that Charles the Bald not only condescended to treat with him on equal terms, but purchased immunity from future inroads by the payment of a large sum of money and the bestowal of magnificent gifts. The distinction acquired by Musa from the results of this expedition indirectly produced great accessions to his power. His son Lope became one of the magistrates of Toledo. The restless population of the border flocked to his standard by thousands. His army was further augmented by numbers of Christians,—Mozarabes as well as Gascons and Navarrese,—whose former habits and experience made them valuable soldiers. The martial spirit of Musa was displayed indiscriminately against Christian and Moslem; his prowess was respected and his independence reluctantly acknowledged alike by the courts of Cordova, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Oviedo. With a pardonable vanity, justified by actual power and the possession of territory, he assumed the title of Third King of Spain. His death in 862 was followed by a partial dismemberment of his dominions, which enabled Mohammed to recover Saragossa, Tudela, and a few other places of minor importance; but only a few years elapsed before the family of Musa, endeared to the people by the exploits of its founders, regained its former ascendency, and once more expelled the forces of the emirate. Although nothing is said of the religious belief of the Beni-Kasi, it may be inferred that they had returned to the Christian communion, as Alfonso III., their close ally, entrusted to these distinguished princes the education of his son Ordoño, heir to the crown of the Asturias and Leon.

The Norman pirates, familiar to the reader of Arab chronicles as Magioges,—a name derived from the fabulous Gog and Magog, whose descendants they were, according to the doubtful authority of mediæval tradition,—seven years after Mohammed ascended the throne made a second descent upon the shores of the Peninsula. The spoil which they had collected in their first excursion and the facility with which they had penetrated into the heart of France and Spain excited their insatiable cupidity, and inspired them with the hope of even more profitable adventures. But these expectations were defeated by the valor of the Galicians and by the prudence of Abd-al-Rahman II., who, as already related, had established a coast-guard, and disposed the naval forces of the emirate to intercept the landing and chastise the audacity of these intrepid and mysterious rovers of the seas. The fame of their former success had increased their numbers, and, after an ineffectual and disastrous attempt to plunder the seaport towns of Galicia, seventy well-manned vessels of their fleet appeared off the coast of Andalusia. Disembarking at various points, the Normans effected considerable damage, but, not venturing inland, their booty bore no comparison in quantity or value to that obtained by their former visitation, and meeting with a resistance entirely unexpected, they retired to try their fortunes on the coast of Africa. In that country many settlements suffered the dreadful evils consequent upon such attacks, and, after destroying whatever they could not carry away, they ravaged the Balearic Isles, and, steering eastward, swept along the shores of the Mediterranean as far as Sicily and Malta. The unprotected regions of Italy and Greece again experienced the dire effects of barbarian malevolence, this time unmitigated by the sympathy of a common religious belief; the instinctive antipathy of the savages of the North to all that bore the stamp of civilization was gratified without restraint; and, laden with plunder of incalculable value and for once satiated with blood and havoc, the pirates directed their course homeward through the Strait of Gibraltar.

The incessant hostilities maintained by Ordoño with the kingdom of Cordova were, in general, favorable to the Christian arms. Encouraged by the victory he had obtained at Albeyda, the Asturian monarch extended his operations far to the south of the Douro. The knowledge of the growing weakness of their enemies, and the consciousness of their own valor and resources, impelled the mountaineers to still greater exertions. The expeditions which had been at first but mere predatory incursions, now assumed the character of enterprises looking towards a permanent occupation of the country. Every advantageous post beyond the border which it was thought possible to retain was thoroughly fortified and garrisoned immediately after its capture. The walls of dismantled Moorish fortresses were repaired. In those towns where the Arab inhabitants preponderated, the latter were replaced by Galician and Asturian colonists. In all cases where a place was taken by storm, the male population was exterminated, and the women and children led into slavery. Many important cities, including, among others, Coria and Salamanca, fell into the hands of the Christians. The effects of this vigorous policy began to be felt so seriously at Cordova that the government summoned all its energies in an endeavor to counteract it, and a powerful army was assembled under the orders of Al-Mondhir, heir presumptive to the crown. That warlike and experienced prince met the forces of the enemy on the banks of the Douro; the Christians sustained a disastrous defeat; the larger part of the lost territory was recovered; and Al-Mondhir, relieved of further care in this quarter, turned his attention to Alava and Navarre. The victorious banners of the Moslems were next displayed before Pampeluna. The environs of that city were devastated; some castles throughout the province which had sheltered formidable bands of marauders were taken and dismantled; and Al-Mondhir, after a campaign unattended by a single disaster, returned in triumph to Cordova.

These reverses, while not sufficient to deter the indomitable mountaineers from repeating their forays, had at least the effect of changing their direction and limiting their extent. Lusitania, formerly invaded with impunity, was again selected as the object of their attack. The fields and vineyards of Lisbon were trampled down by the Christian squadrons; the town of Cintra was burned, and every hamlet accessible to the fury of a pitiless enemy was depopulated and destroyed. But the salutary lesson the Asturians had been recently taught was not lost upon them, and, without waiting for the army that Mohammed despatched in all haste to intercept their retreat, they retired with the same celerity which had marked their appearance.

Unable to arrest these inroads by ordinary means, Mohammed determined to have recourse to his navy, and disembark a force in the centre of the enemy's country. The fleet reached the western coast in safety, but before a landing could be effected was destroyed by a hurricane. The more rigid Moslems, whose strict ideas had been shocked by the braving of an element of which the Prophet had stood in wholesome dread, regarded this catastrophe as a well-merited chastisement from heaven for disobedience to the Koran.

The revolt of Toledo had, from time to time, been followed by the defection of other cities, whose disorders, while important in the aggregate, were singly of little moment in their effects upon the affairs of the Peninsula. One, however, in some respects greatly resembling that by which the old capital of the Visigoths had secured its independence, deserves to be related, as it demonstrates, more thoroughly than an entire chronicle could do, the deplorable helplessness into which the empire founded by Abd-al-Rahman had fallen. Ibn-Merwan, a renegade prominent in former rebellions, and whom the foolish policy of the Moslems has again entrusted with a position of responsibility, aggrieved by some petty insult, deserted, and, accompanied by a few of his retainers, seized the castle of Alanje, near Merida. Besieged before he had time to collect supplies, he nevertheless held out for three months, when he surrendered on condition of his retirement to Bagdad. No sooner was he free, however, than he proclaimed himself the apostle of a new religion, whose doctrines were borrowed from those of both Christianity and Islamism; increased his following by the enlistment of bandits and outlaws; and, imitating the example of the Toledans, strengthened his cause by an alliance with the King of the Asturias. His depredations became so annoying that an army under Haschim, Mohammed's favorite vizier, was despatched against him. The wily partisan found little trouble in decoying the vizier into an ambuscade; his command was annihilated; and he himself was sent as a trophy to the court of Alfonso. When the Emir made proposals for the ransom of Haschim, the Christian king demanded the immense sum of a hundred thousand pieces of gold. Much as he desired the release of his minister, the parsimony of Mohammed, which had increased with years, deterred him from so profuse an expenditure. For many months Haschim remained in captivity, but at length the entreaties of his family overcame the reluctance of the Emir, and he consented to send a portion of the ransom. The balance was secured by the delivery of hostages, and the vizier was finally liberated.

On his return to Cordova, Haschim found that his ancient enemy, with whom even Mohammed himself was unable to cope, had, during his absence, attained to the dignity of an independent prince. The Emir, intimidated by the menaces of Ibn-Merwan, had been compelled to conclude a peace with that chieftain; to cede to him the strong city of Badajoz; to release him from the payment of tribute; and to accede to such conditions as virtually dispensed with the duties of the subject, as well as abrogated the authority of the sovereign.

The effect of this pusillanimous conduct upon the malcontents and fanatics who infested every community of the emirate—a society the amalgamation of whose elements seemed utterly impracticable; destitute of religious unity; without the slightest idea of political virtue or patriotism; and acknowledging no incentive to subordination but that suggested by the employment of military force—may readily be imagined. Few cities preserved even the appearance of order. Every lawless passion raged without control. Feuds were prosecuted without interference. The functions of the magistrate, the obligations of the people, were suspended. The empire, shattered in every part, seemed on the verge of dissolution. Neither proximity to the seat of government, the prospect of royal favor, nor fear of the consequences of treason sufficed to retain the states in their allegiance. Andalusia alone sustained with apparent fidelity the cause of Islam and the dignity and fortunes of the monarch; but even this province was now destined to be the seat of an insurrection whose consequences threatened to involve the civilization of the West and the dynasty of the Ommeyades in sudden and irretrievable ruin.

From the time of the Cæsars, that picturesque chain of mountains now known as the Serrania de Ronda, which traverses the southern part of the Peninsula, has been the scene of insurrection and of lawless deeds which no government has ever been able to thoroughly suppress. The proverbial reluctance of the mountaineer to conform to established laws was, in this region especially, encouraged by the savage character of the country, which, to all unacquainted with its intricate paths and gloomy fastnesses, offered an aspect as forbidding as it was pregnant with danger. The population of these mountains, in love of freedom, in strength of body, in military prowess, was the counterpart of that of the Asturias, while in graceful bearing, in beauty of form and feature, and, above all, in intelligence, it far excelled the uncouth barbarians of the North. It united the various qualities of Roman courage, Punic shrewdness, and Arab temperance and agility. The difficulty of enforcing obedience to the constituted authority was vastly increased by the close relations maintained by even the most remote settlements, leagued together in a confederacy which was, in all but name and acknowledged leadership, an independent republic. The brigand who swooped down upon the flocks of the Roman shepherd, or pillaged the hut of the Visigothic peasant, has his worthy counterparts to-day in the smuggler and highwayman. It has not been many decades since the robber chieftain of the Serrania de Ronda levied blackmail on the posts and convoys of the Spanish government; and the contraband traffic of that region at present exceeds in importance the legitimate trade of any other district of equal area and wealth in the Peninsula.

On the slope of this mountain range, not far from Malaga, lived in the reign of Mohammed a youth of fiery temper and dissolute habits, named Omar-Ibn-Hafsun. His father, descended from a distinguished Gothic family, like many others, had renounced his faith rather with a view to future advantage than from belief in the doctrines of Islam. His son, concerned in frequent broils with the hot-headed peasantry of the neighborhood, had, while but a child, obtained a most unenviable reputation for cruelty and violence. At length, in an encounter with one of his most redoubtable antagonists, the latter paid the penalty of his rashness with his life. Ibn-Hafsun fled to the sierra and joined a gang of banditti, but was eventually seized by the authorities and scourged into insensibility. Escaping from the clutches of the law, he sought the presence of his father, who disowned him and drove him from his home. Knowing that he could not for a great while longer elude the search of the officers who were scouring the country in all directions, he embarked for Tahort in Africa, where he found refuge in the house of a tailor who knew of his family but was ignorant of his recent history, and who willingly accepted him as an apprentice. Here he was soon after recognized by an acquaintance, and, apprehensive of being denounced as a fugitive from justice and surrendered for execution, he left his benefactor and secretly returned to Andalusia. Impelled, perforce, to the profession of an outlaw, he assembled a number of adventurous spirits, repaired an old Roman fort on the summit of Mount Bobastro, and entered upon a life of rapine. The great plain stretching from the foot of the sierra to the capital was soon at his mercy. His band increased with the fame of his exploits; the cities of Andalusia trembled at his name; the governor of the province, who had ventured to attack him with a strong body of regular troops, was reduced to the humiliation of seeing his soldiers routed and his camp pillaged by a handful of daring marauders. This official, whose incompetency was presumed to be the cause of his misfortune, was removed, but his successor, an experienced veteran, fared no better. After a time, the rebel was surrounded by a strong force under the vizier Haschim, and compelled to surrender. His bravery and talents had so excited admiration of the latter that he induced the Emir to offer him an important command in the army. Between the acceptance of this unexpected favor and confinement in a dungeon there could be no hesitation in making a choice, and the former brigand was duly commissioned an officer of the emirate. In many engagements with the insurgents and mountaineers of the North, he bore himself with a self-respecting dignity little to be expected from his former lawless behavior. Admired by his general, respected by his comrades, and feared by his enemies, there seemed to unfold before him the flattering prospect of speedy promotion and all the honors and wealth incident to a distinguished military career. But the petty jealousies of rival courtiers could not brook the sudden elevation and rising prosperity of this new favorite of Haschim. The party opposed to the vizier employed every means to annoy and humiliate the haughty renegade. The governor of the city, under various pretexts, compelled him to constantly move his quarters. The purveyors of the army, instigated by the enemies of his patron, regularly furnished him with rations unfit for consumption. His complaints were ineffectual; even his patron told him that he must avenge his own wrongs. Exasperated by such treatment, above all as it was in no wise deserved, and unwilling to longer submit to the insults that every day became less endurable, Ibn-Hafsun deserted, and again sought the protecting solitudes of the Serrania de Ronda. His band was soon reassembled; the fortress of Bobastro, which the prudence of Mohammed had greatly strengthened, was surprised; and the daring partisan, in the space of a few weeks, became once more the idol of the mountaineers and the terror of the peasantry of Andalusia. But his service in the army of the Emir had wrought a remarkable change in the sentiments and conduct of the outlaw. He proclaimed himself the champion of freedom, the avenger of all who had suffered from the extortions and injustice of the reigning family. In this capacity he was recognized as the representative of the renegades, the Christians, and the Berbers, who thus formed an incongruous, but, for a time, an effective alliance against the dominant Arab aristocracy. By assuming the character of a defender of the oppressed, he invested his cause with a national importance, and relieved it, to a great extent, from the disgraceful imputation of brigandage. The members of his band were subjected to the most severe restraint. Robbery and insubordination were punished with instant death. The entire mountain district was gradually included within his jurisdiction, and security of property and life, such as that region never knew before, existed. It became a common saying among the Andalusians that a woman loaded with silver might cross any portion of the Serrania de Ronda without the least danger of molestation. Such a demonstration of security would have been elsewhere impracticable, even in the populous districts of the emirate patrolled by a vigilant police, and its attempt would have invited certain death in the distant and unprotected provinces of the empire.

In the control of his soldiers, Ibn-Hafsun adopted all those politic expedients which raise commanders to popularity and renown,—inexorable justice, unstinted liberality, prompt recognition of efficient service, merciless punishment of serious infractions of discipline. His increasing power invited the adherence of malcontents who held responsible posts under the government, among them not a few renegades, those pests of every administration whose credulous weakness heeded their protestations or trusted their loyalty. In the year 886, Ibn-Hafsun was assisting one of these traitors in the defence of Alhama against the prince Al-Mondhir. The bandit chieftain had been wounded in a sally, and the garrison was about to surrender, when news reached the prince of the death of his father, and necessitated his immediate return. This unhoped-for change in his fortunes offered an opportunity which the wily Ibn-Hafsun was not slow to appreciate. By plausible representations he induced many towns to submit to his authority, and the accession of Al-Mondhir found him at once confronted with a powerful enemy, whose military genius and fertility of resource promised a long and doubtful struggle for supremacy.

The death of Mohammed was sudden and peaceful. His reign of thirty-four years was the most stormy and unfortunate of any hitherto directed by the Ommeyade monarchs. In addition to manifold political calamities, it was afflicted with a drought severe beyond all hitherto mentioned in the annals of Spain, with famine and pestilence, and with earthquakes that increased the mortality to an appalling degree.

This epoch is conspicuous for the shameful degradation of the Ommeyade dynasty of Spain. In its general features, it also presents an epitome of the evils which afflicted the Hispano-Arab domination under every ruler and in every age. The inherent vices of the Moslem system; the irreconcilable character of the constituents of Moslem society—their turbulence, malignity, and faithlessness—were discernible alike under the administration of Abd-al-Aziz, the first of the emirs, and of Boabdil, the last of the kings. The condition of Mohammed at times seemed desperate. The majority of his subjects were in rebellion. Twenty years of warfare had failed to subdue Toledo, which, with the extensive territory subject to it, was now practically independent. The power of the Christians was increasing daily. Their boundaries were steadily advancing southward. Their banners had even been seen from the walls of the capital. The Franks had obtained a permanent foothold in the Gothic March, forever lost to the jurisdiction and the faith of Islam. The mighty kingdom which had once reached from the banks of the Garonne to the Mediterranean had shrunk to the dimensions of an insignificant principality. Septimania, Leon, Aragon, Catalonia, and a large portion of Castile were in the hands of the enemy. In the North, the walis of the scattered fortresses which still preserved a nominal allegiance to the Emir were secretly leagued with the infidel. In the West, the audacious Ibn-Merwan plundered at will the rich settlements of Estremadura and Lusitania. Valencia and Murcia, the nurseries of many a serious revolt, exhibited unconcealed signs of disaffection, caused by the imposition of excessive taxes and the uncontrolled rapacity of their governors. In the South, the daring Ibn-Hafsun, the representative of the prejudices and the aspirations of a numerous and growing faction, exercised despotic rule over the greater part of Andalusia. Brigands swarmed on the highways. Travel was impossible, except under the protection of a strong escort. Communication between the great cities of the Peninsula was as difficult as if they had been separated by vast continents or seas. At one time, for eight years, intercourse was entirely suspended between Saragossa and Cordova. In every community an ill-defined but universal presentiment of impending evil prevailed. Society was distracted by the quarrels of theologians, frivolous in their nature, but often serious in their consequences. In the history of Islam, a dispute concerning a religious formula or the authenticity of a tradition had, more than once, led to a bloody proscription, or involved entire nations in war. While the majority of the Christian tributaries acquiesced in the conditions imposed by the Moslem laws, numbers of deluded fanatics, resorting to every species of outrage and blasphemy, courted the tortures and the fame of martyrdom. Much of the country was depopulated. Where the inhabitants remained, agricultural and commercial operations greatly declined, and in some districts were absolutely suspended. The public revenues were diminished to such an extent that even the penuriousness of the Emir, aided by the extortions of his merciless officials, could with difficulty provide for the necessary expenses of the royal household. At the death of Mohammed, scarcely one-fourth of the territorial area over which he claimed sovereign jurisdiction acknowledged the legitimacy of his title or contributed to the maintenance of his power.

The evidences of national decadence are only too perceptible in the disappearance of public spirit and military virtue; in the incessant prosecution of intestine warfare; in the almost unresisted encroachments of the Christian arms; in the habitual treachery of officers entrusted with high commands; in the jealousies of courtiers and the intrigues of fanatics; in the feigned enthusiasm of crusades inaugurated in obedience to the principles of Islam, sometimes crowned with partial success, but often terminating in disgrace and disaster.

The character of Mohammed was principally remarkable for irresolution and parsimony. He surrendered whole provinces and degraded his dignity by humiliating concessions extorted by the threats of insolent chiefs of banditti. Such was his meanness that, in a transaction involving the payment of more than a hundred thousand dinars, he defrauded the treasury officials of a few pieces of copper. He reduced the pay of his soldiers. He condescended to share the salaries of government employees, whom he appointed conditionally upon the division of their earnings. Yet, with these serious faults, he was the patron of science, the friend of the learned, a graceful poet and orator, and one of the most accomplished calligraphists of his time. The lack of effective organization; the secret and implacable hostility that pervaded every branch of the body politic; the boldness and tenacity of the Asturians, aided by the sympathy of an innumerable body of Christian ecclesiastics domiciled in every city and village of the empire; and the unavoidable catastrophes of nature, render it extremely problematical whether, under similar circumstances, a prince possessed of greater ability than Mohammed could have better sustained the declining fortunes of the emirate.

CHAPTER XI

REIGN OF AL-MONDHIR; REIGN OF ABDALLAH

886–912

Parallel between the Policy of the Moorish and Asturian Courts—Alfonso III.—His Conquests—Energy of Al-Mondhir—Siege of Bobastro—Stratagem of Ibn-Hafsun—The Emir is Poisoned—Abdallah ascends the Throne—Conditions of Parties and Sects—Prevalence of Disorder—Insurrection at Elvira—Success of the Arab Faction—Disturbances at Seville—General Disaffection of the Provinces—Ibn-Hafsun defeated at Aguilar—Disastrous and Permanent Effects of the Continuance of Anarchy—Sudden Death of Abdallah—Important Political Changes wrought by a Generation of Civil Warfare.

A STRIKING parallel exists between the successive events that compose respectively the political history of the rival kingdoms of Christian and Moorish Spain. In the circumstances of physical environment, in national traditions, in manners, language, and religious belief, no two races could be more dissimilar. Yet, in many respects, the accounts of the disturbances following the accession of the Kings of the Asturias and the Emirs of Cordova are counterparts of each other. Both monarchies were, in theory, elective. The independent spirit of the Arab and the untamed ferocity of the Goth were equally opposed to the subordination necessarily implied by the adoption of the law of hereditary descent. As the ruler grew more powerful, he naturally became more anxious to transmit to his descendants the authority which had been gained by his valor or confirmed by his prudence. To secure to his family this coveted advantage, he was accustomed to solicit, in his lifetime, the public acknowledgment of his son as heir apparent, who had, not infrequently, been associated with him in the conduct of the administration. A council composed of the principal officers, prelates, and nobles of the realm was convoked, and required to show its devotion to king or emir by swearing allegiance to the prince whom paternal affection, and sometimes distinguished merit, had designated as the future sovereign. This assent, prompted by interest and the certainty of royal favor, was seldom refused, and, strengthened by custom until it became a part of the constitution, was, after a few generations, regarded as a mere ceremonial,—the formal assertion of a right whose legality had been tacitly established by considerations of public policy, if not by ancient prescription. But such was the effect of a regulation in governments which preserved the forms of election but repudiated its untrammelled exercise, that the choice of the monarch, as soon as he ascended the throne, generally found himself embroiled with his less fortunate brethren, each of whom believed that he had been defrauded of his birthright. That the mere consent of the council was not deemed conclusive is proven by the fact that possession of the palace was deemed *prima facie* evidence of title, a principle recognized equally at Oviedo and Cordova. With insubordination came civil war and the lamentable consequences of internecine conflict. The savage instincts of the Gothic princes caused them to blind their unfortunate rivals and immure them for life in the foul and reeking cells of subterranean dungeons. The vengeance of the Moor, however, was usually satisfied with short imprisonment, and, if the culprit expressed contrition, he was often restored to favor and his crime condoned. The student of ancient Spanish history cannot fail to be deeply impressed with the different methods of dealing with treason in the north and south of the Peninsula, regions arrayed against each other in continual hostility,—exhibiting marked resemblances when they were least to be expected, and, in disposing of offences aimed at the throne and life of the monarch, displaying, on the one hand, an indulgence dictated by a magnanimity that seemed almost suicidal; on the other, a severity characterized by atrocities that could only proceed from the grossest barbarism.

The long and illustrious reign of Alfonso III., worthily named The Great, which occupies so much space in the early annals of the Reconquest, affords a conspicuous example of the vicissitudes and trials that attended the adventurous lives of the princes of the Asturian monarchy. Associated with his father Ordoño for four years preceding his advent to the throne, he was far from being a novice when summoned to assume the grave responsibilities of sovereignty. The four brothers of the King, jealous of the paternal preference, and disputing the legality of a custom that arbitrarily excluded from the succession even those most eligible under the provisions of the ancient Visigothic constitution, united their forces in a formidable attempt to subvert the authority of Alfonso. The enterprise resulted disastrously; the barbarous severity of the laws was demonstrated without the mitigation that might have been expected from the influence of fraternal sympathy, and the unhappy princes were deprived of their eyesight and imprisoned for life in the castle of Oviedo. Three of them speedily sank under the hardships of confinement; but the fourth, Veremundo, succeeded, by some fortunate circumstance, in escaping, and was eventually raised by his adherents to the government of Astorga. In this strong city, occasionally assisted by the arms of the Moors, he successfully defied the attacks of the King of the Asturias for more than seven years. The address and courage necessarily implied by this determined resistance are in themselves sufficiently remarkable; but the fact that the hero who directed operations which thwarted the designs and repulsed the forces of an entire kingdom for this extended period was totally blind may well awaken surprise and admiration.

The eminent abilities of Alfonso III. were displayed on many a hotly contested field and in many a critical emergency during his long career. His arms were carried farther into the country of the enemy than the bravest of his predecessors had ventured to penetrate. Coimbra, Oporto, Zamora, Toro, Simancas, and numerous other cities of less importance were added to the dominions of the Christian monarchy by the efforts of his valor or the terror of his name. The sound of his trumpets had awakened the affrighted peasantry whose fields occupied the fertile slopes of the Sierra Morena. His banners had been repeatedly seen from the battlements of Merida. His squadrons had menaced the suburbs of the Moslem capital. He enforced with unabated rigor the ruthless policy of extermination inaugurated by the first monarch of his name. The captives taken in his numerous expeditions were, for the most part, distributed among the estates of the ecclesiastical order and the royal demesnes, to be employed in the construction of churches, monasteries, castles, and palaces. With each advance of the line marking the boundary of the two kingdoms to the southward, new fortresses were erected, the most famous of which was that which stood upon the site of modern Burgos, a city whose fortunes have ever been so closely identified with those of the Castilian monarchy. The province of Navarre, heretofore considered as an insignificant principality, whose allegiance to the Asturian Crown was conceded rather by the indifference of its inhabitants than based upon the acknowledgment of any well-defined obligation, was, by the marriage of Alfonso III. to Ximena, daughter of the count, enabled to claim, for the first time in history, the position of an independent kingdom. For thirty-one years Alfonso maintained an incessant contest with the Emirs of Cordova. He saw the dominions of the descendants of those terrified fugitives who had taken shelter in the wilds of the Pyrenees extended far beyond the Douro and the Tagus to the shores of the distant Guadiana. He witnessed the thorough consolidation of the temporal and ecclesiastical powers, a union portending so much to the future renown and dishonor of Spain. The shrine of Santiago had already been enriched by the devotion of the pious and the fears of the wicked; the rude hamlet had begun to assume the appearance of a city; the homely chapel had been replaced by a stately cathedral; and a constant stream of weeping and hysterical pilgrims attested the growth of a spirit of fanaticism whose effects were to be, erelong, conspicuously exhibited in those romantic deeds of daring which abound in the annals of the Reconquest. At the close of his reign, three-fourths of the Peninsula—a territory that, with the exception of a corner of the mountain wilderness, had once paid tribute to the followers of Mohammed—was in the possession of the champions of Christendom or their allies.

The youth of the new Emir, Al-Mondhir, had, like that of his ancestors, been passed amidst military exercises or in warlike enterprises. No prince had yet ascended the throne under more auspicious circumstances, nor, at the same time, better qualified to restore the tarnished lustre of the Moslem name. His discretion and sagacity bore a just proportion to the impulsive courage that distinguished him among a nation of heroes. The energy of his character may be inferred from his response to the Toledans, who, immediately after his accession, sent him the customary tribute, which he at once returned with the following message, " Keep your money for the expenses of war, for, if God so wills, I shall soon attack you."

The absence of Al-Mondhir, as has been already related, gave the redoubtable rebel Ibn-Hafsun an opportunity to greatly increase his following, and to secure, by threats and delusive promises, many important fortresses in Andalusia. The resolute prince, thoroughly cognizant of the dangerous character of his adversary, did not suffer him to long enjoy the advantages which the domestic misfortune of others rather than his own abilities had enabled him to obtain. Leaving Cordova quietly at the head of a body of veteran troops, he suddenly laid siege to the strong post of Archidona, commanded by an ally of Ibn-Hafsun, and, like him, a renegade. The boldness of this chieftain, who, while defaming the religion he had renounced, declared his willingness to be executed in case of capture, led Al-Mondhir to tempt the cupidity of the citizens by an enormous bribe; the apostate was surrendered, and, in accordance with the terms of his defiance, underwent a death ignominious in the eyes of all Mussulmans,—crucifixion between the bodies of two of the most unclean of animals. Terrified by this example of severity, Archidona opened its gates. The cavalry of the Emir then swept the country of provisions; some towns were plundered; a score of insurgents selected for prominence in their party were executed; and the entire army of Al-Mondhir, flushed with success and animated by the hope of booty and vengeance, invested the formidable stronghold of Bobastro.

While he entertained little fear that his castle could be taken, the cunning Ibn-Hafsun determined to provide if possible against such a contingency, and relieve his followers from the disastrous consequences of a blockade. With every appearance of sincerity, he professed a desire to conclude a permanent peace. Al-Mondhir, with all his experience, was not proof against the humble protestations of regret and assurances of future loyalty proffered by the rebel chieftain. A treaty was drawn up virtually at the dictation of the latter. At his request, a hundred mules, guarded by an escort of a hundred and sixty horsemen, were furnished to convey his family and property to Cordova. His apparent submission having removed all suspicions of his good faith, he escaped without difficulty in the dead of night; and having returned to Bobastro, which the army of the Emir had quitted, he collected a few soldiers, massacred the escort, and by daybreak was once more under shelter of the towers of the fortress. The rage of Al-Mondhir, aroused to the highest pitch by this exhibition of duplicity, impelled him to take a solemn oath that he would never cease his efforts until the perfidious rebel should have paid the extreme penalty of his treason. The blockade was renewed, but with diminished vigor, as the discipline of the troops was not only lax, but they were disheartened at the prospect of a protracted siege, the opinion prevailing among them that Bobastro was impregnable. Aware of the increasing discontent, a conspiracy was formed against Al-Mondhir by his brother Abdallah and the eunuchs of the palace; the court physician was prevailed upon to use a poisoned lancet to bleed his royal patient for some trifling indisposition; and the gallant prince, whose career bade fair to be one of the most illustrious of his dynasty, died in excruciating torture after a reign of a little less than two years. He left no sons, and the criminal design of Abdallah, which had been pushed rapidly to its execution for this very reason, having been accomplished, that prince, informed of the death of Al-Mondhir before it was known to his friends, appeared suddenly in camp, asserted his claim to the throne, and received the reluctant homage of the officers of the army.

The soldiers, who respected the abilities and stood in awe of the ferocious spirit of Ibn-Hafsun, displayed no grief at the death of their sovereign. With every manifestation of joy, they turned their backs upon the rebel stronghold, and, without preserving the semblance of military order, began a straggling march towards their homes. Each village which this armed rabble traversed was the scene of hundreds of desertions, and of the plunder of the already grievously oppressed inhabitants. The disorderly retreat had not escaped the notice of Ibn-Hafsun, and he was already close in the rear of the retiring column when a messenger arrived from the usurper imploring his forbearance, and declaring that he entertained no hostile intentions towards him. The rebel leader had the courtesy to respect this petition; and Abdallah, guarding his brother's corpse lashed carelessly upon a camel, was permitted to reach Cordova without molestation. So complete was the disorganization of the army, that of a force numbering several thousand men scarcely twoscore troopers remained to escort the new monarch to the gates of the capital.

The crown that had been polluted by treason and fratricide seemed destined now to become the instrument of universal misfortune. The political condition of the Peninsula was already extremely complicated. Society was everywhere threatened with dissolution. The Arabs, proud of their lineage, and appropriating to their race the credit of conquests largely achieved by their allies and proselytes, constituted an aristocracy whose pretensions were both unwarrantable and offensive. Far from recognizing the new converts to Islam as brothers,—as recommended by the Koran,—they treated them as inferiors, and frequently loaded them with indignities which they would have hesitated to inflict upon their own slaves. The lapse of generations, the most eminent services, the greatest talents, the performance of acts of valor that evoked the plaudits of their enemies, could not, in the eyes of these haughty descendants of idolaters and banditti, atone for the reproach of ancient infidelity. But it was only in their antagonism to recent converts and their children that the Arabs were united. Between the Syrian and the Bedouin of the Hedjaz still existed an irreconcilable enmity. The hereditary feud of Maadite and Yemenite preserved all its original bitterness and intensity, although, on account of the incessant clashing of other interests, its manifestations were not so pronounced as they had been in the earlier years of the emirate. The confiscation of the estates of Gothic fugitives and the fortunes of the Conquest had given the Arabs an opportunity to acquire extensive estates and to amass immense riches. The deeply-rooted antipathy of the Bedouin to confinement had caused the aristocracy of the Peninsula to establish itself in the vicinity of large cities, such as Jaen, Cordova, Seville, and Malaga, where, surrounded by an army of retainers and slaves, they enjoyed the pleasures and independence of a pastoral life, for which they had inherited a predilection from their ancestors, the nobles of Central and Western Arabia.

But the several factions into which the Arabs were divided bore no comparison in numbers, power, or opulence to those composing the remainder of the population. It was but a small proportion of the Christians who, in consequence of the invasion of Tarik, had sought the unfettered exercise of political and religious liberty amidst the wilds of the Asturias. The sacred traditions of ancestry, the ties of birth, the associations of childhood, the fear of penury, the hope of wealth and distinction, retained the large majority in their homes, where many continued to enjoy the consideration derived from exalted rank and great possessions. Some paid gladly the reasonable tribute that promised a greater degree of security than they had ever known under the kings and chieftains of Gothic lineage. These were called Ahl-al-Dhimmah, The Tributaries. The members of another class, the Ajem, boldly refused to recognize the authority of the conqueror, and maintained a nominal independence in the mountains where they had their haunts, but, destitute of effective organization, they scarcely rose to the dignity of banditti. The alluring inducements of pecuniary interest and political advantage had formed another caste or faction, more numerous and more important in its influence on the fortunes of the Peninsula than all the others combined,—the Muwallads, a comprehensive term denoting persons whose derivation, while nominally Arab, was yet tainted with some foreign impurity, and which, corrupted into mulatto, has been incorporated into many of the languages of Europe. This designation was popularly applied to the descendants of renegades or apostates, called Mosalimah, an appellation corresponding to the Moriscoes, or New Christians, converted after the capture of Granada by the zealous Ximenes and his coadjutors through the potent arguments of the rack and fagot. Still another caste was the Muraddin, former converts, who, having renounced the faith of Islam, had rendered themselves amenable to death, the penalty prescribed by Mohammed for the unpardonable crime of apostasy. These were outlaws and highwaymen, who, in defiance of the feeble police maintained by the government, openly levied contributions upon travellers within sight of the minarets of Cordova. Add to these disorganizing elements of society the half-savage Berbers,—for the most part idolaters in religion and assassins in war,—and the difficulties that confronted the ablest princes of the Ommeyades may well be conceived. The Jews, whose mercantile pursuits made them on all occasions advocates for peace and frequently useful mediators, were robbed and oppressed in turn by every faction into whose hands they were unfortunate enough to fall. No region in the world of equal area contained such a mixed and turbulent population as the Spanish Peninsula before the Reconquest. The emirs, actuated by a principle familiar to all despotic sovereigns threatened with a curtailment of their power, bestowed their favor in turn upon the Arabs and the Muwallads, according as one or the other seemed about to obtain a pre-eminence dangerous to the safety of the state. But this policy reacted in an unexpected manner, and aggravated the evils it was intended to obviate. The victorious party never failed to abuse its advantage with brutal severity. The faction for the time being under the frown of the Court, lost all respect for, and renounced its allegiance to, a government that refused it the protection of the laws. The result was a bitter conflict in which Arab and Muwallad were arrayed against the Emir and against each other at the same time. The death of Al-Mondhir was the signal for increased disorder, which the feeble and hypocritical Abdallah was incompetent to suppress. The Arab nobles had long hoped to revive, in another land, that period of unrestricted license whose traditions survived in the exciting poems of the robbers and shepherds of the Desert. The famous Ibn-Hafsun, whose name was the terror of every hamlet, and who, as the head of the rebels of Bobastro and the natural ally of every party of malcontents, was more powerful than the Emir himself, now began to entertain hopes of being actually invested with the royal dignity which he in substance already enjoyed.

The situation of Abdallah was perilous in the extreme. The loyalty for the House of Ommeyah, which had been for generations the marked characteristic of the Arab of Syrian descent and the Koreishite alike, was greatly impaired. The treasury was empty. The taxes due from the walis were, for the most part, withheld. The tribute of the Christians, instigated by the Muwallads whom they considered their champions, was, except in Cordova and its immediate environs, suspended. The royal convoys were intercepted and plundered on the highways. The fidelity of the populace of the capital, suspected of secretly holding communication with the enemy, was distrusted. A spirit of bravado had even prompted Ibn-Hafsun to pass several days within its gates, which he had entered unchallenged in the disguise of a beggar. The prejudices of Abdallah inclined him to an alliance with the renegades. His early years had been passed in intimate friendship with the officers of the guard, who had since become distinguished leaders of that party. The achievements of Ibn-Hafsun had rather awakened his admiration than provoked his resentment. Conscious of his helplessness, and desirous of conciliating the most powerful chief of the opposition, he went so far as to tender him the government of Regio, conditional upon his return to his allegiance. The crafty rebel, to whom an oath was an unmeaning ceremony and who desired a respite to enable him to reorganize his army, acquiesced without hesitation, and even consented to send his son and several of his officers as hostages to the court of the Emir. The latter treated these pledges of the uncertain fidelity of a perfidious vassal with all the distinction usually reserved for the emissaries of royalty. They were magnificently entertained, lodged in palaces, and presented with costly gifts. Unrestrained of their liberty, they had no trouble in escaping when, a few months later, they received a secret message to repair to Bobastro. All security for his loyal behavior being lost by their departure, Ibn-Hafsun resumed his depredations with greater audacity than ever. His aid was soon afterwards solicited by the renegades of a district which had hitherto rather avoided than courted his alliance,—the city and province of Elvira.

In the general distribution of lands made under the direction of the emirs who acknowledged the Khalif of Damascus, the beautiful plain subsequently known as the Vega of Granada was assigned to the natives of Syria. With true Bedouin reserve and love of freedom, the adventurers who had won this earthly paradise by their valor disposed their habitations as far from the crowded haunts of men as the extent and situation of their estates would permit. The increase of their flocks, and the produce of the soil tilled by multitudes of industrious slaves, soon raised their descendants to the height of opulence. In the course of events, through confiscations for treason, the casualties of war, and the effects of disease, many Arab families became extinct, and their real property, by purchase or extortion, became vested in a comparatively small number of great proprietors, whose possessions embraced all the most valuable estates in the province. These lords formed a caste that, for arrogance and exclusiveness, had no equal in the Peninsula. The national pride of the Syrian noble was immensely flattered by the sovereign pre-eminence of his countrymen, the princes of the House of Ommeyah. In his inordinate vanity he fancied that the future of that dynasty depended on his individual exertions, as he habituated himself to believe that its establishment was solely due to the genius and efforts of his ancestors. And yet with all his professed attachment to the crown, his loyalty had been more than once justly suspected. There, as elsewhere, the interests of the court had been repeatedly sacrificed to gratify the malice of faction,—for the inappeasable feud between Yemenite and Maadite was nowhere maintained with greater virulence than in the province of Elvira. In his intercourse with his equals the Arab of the Vega—like all his brethren exposed for a time to the refinements of civilization—was a model of chivalrous politeness and graceful courtesy. But his demeanor was far different when his affairs demanded any association with the inhabitants of the city, who, in his eyes, labored under the double reproach of being traders and renegades. No opportunity was lost to humiliate these peaceful citizens; although in practice devout Moslems, they were constantly taunted with their apostasy; and for their denunciation the inexhaustible vocabulary of the Arab was ransacked for opprobrious epithets, one of which, " filii canum," has descended to our time as the very epitome of insult.

The high spirit of the inhabitants of Elvira chafed under the gross and unprovoked abuse which they were constantly compelled to undergo. They also were vain of their ancestry and proud of their souvenirs. In the early days of the Visigothic empire, the ancient Illiberis had been an oasis in the dismal waste of Paganism that included the entire Peninsula. It had been the seat of the first Spanish bishopric. There had been held, in the first quarter of the fourth century, a famous Council, many of whose canons are still recognized as valid by the Roman Catholic Church. Among them was one requiring the celibacy of the priesthood, a regulation subsequently adopted and enforced by Gregory VII. There, too, was contrived a scheme of discipline which, originally aimed at the rich and prosperous Hebrews, became the model of that awful engine of persecution, the Inquisition, whose tortures, improved by ecclesiastical deviltry, filled the world with terror after the lapse of more than a thousand years. The city, although inferior in natural advantages to its growing neighbor, Granada, was nevertheless of considerable political and commercial importance. The generous piety of the Gothic nobles had enriched its see with large endowments, and its churches in elegance and splendor could compare with any of the kingdom.

But the contagious example of the prevalent apostasy, a condition which dispensed with tribute and at the same time appealed strongly to the ambition of the unscrupulous and the selfish passions of the multitude, made itself felt before long even in this citadel of Christianity. The corruption of the prelates, headed by the bishop, Samuel, whose profligacy attained for him a notoriety proportionate to the dignity of the office he disgraced, drove the indignant Christians by hundreds into the fold of Islam. Those who remained faithful to the traditions of the Church were so persecuted that no resource was left to them but to join their brethren, many of whom had sacrificed their convictions from more ignoble motives than that of self-preservation. This wholesale desertion was greatly facilitated by the connivance of the inferior clergy, as well as by the open violence of the bishop and his coadjutors, who, corrupted by the Moslems, exerted themselves with far greater energy and success in obtaining proselytes to the religion of Mohammed than they had ever done in promoting the cause of Christ. In the end, the excesses of this unworthy prelate became so insufferable that he was removed from his see and divested of his sacred authority; whereupon he at once repaired to Cordova, and, having publicly renounced his faith, was rewarded with the lucrative employment of persecutor, an infamous office whose duties he discharged with all the malignant assiduity of the renegade.

Long before the accession of Abdallah, the resentment of the Muwallads of Elvira, inflamed to the highest pitch, had broken out against their churlish neighbors, the Arab nobles, in acts of open hostility. The sympathies of the Jews of Granada seem to have been with the latter, who, on various occasions, were saved from destruction by the friendly walls of that city. Superior in numbers and equal in bravery to their adversaries, the result of every engagement was favorable to the renegades. As neither party was accustomed to give quarter, the struggle soon assumed the character of a war of extermination. In the year 889 a number of Syrian chieftains, who were visiting the capital of the province under the protection of a truce, were treacherously massacred in the streets, a catastrophe that gave the Muwallads, already sufficiently powerful, a momentary but uncontested ascendency. The Arabs, whose numbers had been depleted by many consecutive years of warfare, forgot, for the moment, their hereditary enmities, which no disaster, however serious, could entirely reconcile, in the engrossing passion of vengeance. They chose for their leader Sauwar, a venerable warrior whose declining age had been embittered by the bloody sacrifice of his only son to the fury of the renegades. His misfortunes had erased from his bosom every feeling of compassion, every suggestion of humanity. A brutal ferocity that regarded the slightest concession to the weakness of an enemy as a crime was the prominent characteristic of the sheik whom the Arabs now selected to restore their fallen fortunes. The first exploit of this savage warrior was the capture of Monte Sacro, a stronghold north of Granada which had been the scene of the greatest victory of the Muwallads and the occasion of the death of his beloved son. Notwithstanding its strength, the castle was carried at the first attack, and the garrison, six thousand in number, massacred to a man. Encouraged by his success and infuriated by the taste of blood, the desperate Sauwar sated to the full his thirst for retribution. The terror of his arms caused many towns to surrender without a blow. But submission conferred no indulgence, and the work went relentlessly on. No Muwallad who was so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of the Arabs escaped. A mere suspicion of Spanish or Gothic descent was deemed sufficient evidence of identity, and brought certain and speedy death. Even those conditions of helplessness which most readily appeal to the compassion of mankind were not considered in this indiscriminate proscription, and many distinguished families whose names were identified with some of the most conspicuous events of Roman and Visigothic annals were swept at one blow from the face of the earth.

This reign of terror, which threatened the extermination of their race, induced the renegades to appeal for assistance to Djad, the Arab governor of the province, whose authority they had disputed after refusing the customary tribute. Satisfied of their sincerity, he marched at the head of a considerable force against the formidable partisan. The result was a decisive victory for the Arabs; the bodies of seven thousand dead strewed the field of battle, and the governor remained a prisoner in the camp of the enemy.

The prestige acquired by Sauwar after these decisive advantages caused his alliance to be sought by many neighboring cities, among them Calatrava and Jaen. Reduced to despair, the Muwallad faction declared their willingness to renew their allegiance to the Emir. But the latter was powerless to render them any substantial assistance. The credit of the government was so low that it could scarcely pay the troops required for the defence of the capital. The personal qualities of Abdallah were not such as to enlist the sympathy or arouse the enthusiasm of the people, and thereby compensate, in some degree, for the deficiencies of the treasury. The governors of the provinces were, for all practical purposes, independent princes. Cordova was the residence of the flower of the Arab nobility, whose prejudices were all on the side of Sauwar and his followers in their efforts to exterminate the detested renegades, an enterprise which they regarded as little less meritorious than a crusade against an infidel foe. Willing but unable to exert his authority in behalf of his unfortunate subjects, the Emir decided to assume the less dangerous office of mediator. He therefore offered Sauwar the government of several cities on condition that he would acknowledge himself a vassal of the crown and cease his persecution of the renegades. This advantageous proposal was readily agreed to; the oath of allegiance was taken by both factions; hostilities were suspended, and, for the first time in many years, the province of Elvira was permitted to enjoy the blessings of public and private tranquillity.

Habituated to warfare and scenes of carnage, the active spirit of Sauwar chafed under the monotony and dulness entailed by civil drudgery and magisterial duties. The territory that Ibn-Hafsun had seized, and over which he ruled with despotic sway, extended to the borders of the province of Elvira. Unable to resist the temptation, Sauwar turned his attention to the adherents of that renowned champion of the Muwallads, and soon the valleys and hamlets of eastern Andalusia were visited with a scourge whose barbarity had no parallel since the invasion of the Vandals. The sympathy of their fellow-sectaries, the subjects of Sauwar, was enlisted in behalf of those who were sufferers in a common cause; the Muwallads of Elvira almost without exception rose in arms; and the Arabs, expelled from the city and chased in every direction, sought by a common impulse a temporary refuge in Granada.

The fortress of the Alhambra, a structure of remote and uncertain antiquity, is mentioned definitely for the first time during the civil wars of Elvira. It was known to the Arabs at least a century after the Conquest, as Ka'lat-al-Hamra, The Red Castle, and its commanding position and natural strength render it probable that it may have been the site of a citadel as early as the Carthaginian occupation. The whole of the Alhambra Hill was not enclosed, as at present, and, at the time under consideration, the fortifications were confined to the jutting point overlooking the present city and familiar to modern travellers as the Alcazaba. Abandoned by the government, and uncared for by the inhabitants, whose Jewish antecedents induced them to trust for their safety rather to their acuteness than to their courage, the venerable castle had fallen into decay. The repeated sieges which it had sustained in the incessant contests between rival factions had, in addition to the ruin produced by the effects of time and the action of the elements, greatly diminished its capacity for resistance. In their critical situation, where all depended on their individual exertions,—for no hope of reinforcements could be entertained,—the superstitious fears of the people, aided by the suggestions of a vivid imagination, found in each trivial incident a token of propitious or fatal augury. Fortunately for their cause, the favorable omens preponderated on the day when the besieging force, whose numbers amounted to twenty thousand, prepared to storm their intrenchments. With characteristic cunning the prudent Sauwar determined to counteract by stratagem the overwhelming superiority of his adversaries. Leaving the citadel, and unobserved in the confusion of battle, he suddenly appeared at the head of a picked detachment in the rear of the enemy. Completely surprised, the latter was at once thrown into confusion; the entire army took to flight, and the terrified renegades were pursued to the very gates of Elvira. The Muwallad army was completely destroyed. The entire province was in mourning. There was no household that did not lament the absence of one or more of its number, no soldier that did not deplore the loss of a comrade or a friend. In deep humiliation the remnant of the renegade host prepared to defend the capital to which but a few hours before they had expected to return in triumph. The elation of the Arabs exhibited itself in all the extravagant exultation peculiar to that impassioned race. The fame of Sauwar spread to the furthest limits of the Peninsula. His exploits were celebrated with varying partiality by the poets of both factions, whose interesting productions often compensate for the unsatisfactory accounts of the chronicler, and in their animated and graphic description of important events and distinguished personages contribute copious and invaluable information to the historian.

The disheartened members of the Muwallad faction now resolved to place themselves under the protection of Ibn-Hafsun. As yet, they had never asked his assistance, nor, what is even more remarkable, had tempted his ambition or incurred his hostility. The aspiring chieftain embraced with ardor a cause so congenial to his adventurous spirit. With a confidence born of many victories he encountered the Arabs in the field. The Muwallads were again defeated, however, and it was with difficulty that Ibn-Hafsun, badly wounded, and seeing decimated the ranks of the veterans who had been his reliance in a score of campaigns, effected his retreat and escaped to the mountains of Ronda.

The inhabitants of Elvira eventually succeeded in accomplishing by artifice what they had failed to do by arms, and Sauwar, lured with his escort into an ambuscade, was slaughtered. The brutal instinct of human nature that, foiled in its efforts against the living, finds a savage gratification in the mutilation of the dead, was exhibited in its most revolting aspect by the women of Elvira. With the cries of wild beasts they tore in pieces and devoured the corpse of their persecutor. This resort to cannibalism as a means of revenge appears to have been frequently practised in the wars of the Arabs and of those nations subjected to their domination. It is mentioned in the pre-Islamitic poems and traditions. A conspicuous instance, already referred to, occurred at the battle of Ohod. And examples are not wanting of the preservation of a custom aggravated by the rancor resulting from almost perpetual civil war under the Eastern and Western Khalifates, whose violation of the decencies of life would seem sufficient to disgust barbarians, to say nothing of nations long familiar with the amenities of society and the requirements of a comparatively advanced civilization.

The serious commotions which disturbed the peace of Elvira were no isolated instances of public disorder, but rather a type of what was afflicting the entire Peninsula. In Seville, the rebellious Arabs had by turns united with and opposed the renegades in defiance of the authority of the sovereign. The old metropolis of Bætica has, from its foundation, never relinquished its proud position as the capital of Southern Spain. Other cities have enjoyed the nominal title, but the Queen of Andalusia has always, under Carthaginian, Roman, Goth, and Arab, maintained an acknowledged and deserved pre-eminence. Its natural advantages were unsurpassed. It stood in the midst of one of the most fertile plains of Europe.

The Guadalquivir brought the treasures of the East to its gates. Long the seat of the primate of the kingdom, its souvenirs gave it a peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the Christian. Its business facilities attracted a numerous and enterprising Hebrew colony. The blending of many races, the dominion of a score of dynasties, had imparted to the disposition of its inhabitants a peculiar character, an uncommon fertility of genius, a phenomenal activity of intellect. To their literary talents and stinging wit was added an inconstancy in political affiliations and religious belief that was often a subject of reproach and scandal. With a strange unanimity they had at the first suggestion of the substantial benefits of apostasy renounced the truths of the gospel. A magnificent mosque had been built to reward their subserviency, but neither the daily practice of the rites of Islam, the adoption of the Arabic language, nor the change of costume could eradicate those prominent mental characteristics which had been formed by the domestic life and time-honored traditions of twelve eventful centuries.

The same prejudices and national antagonism existed between the Muwallad and the Arab parties at Seville as at Elvira with the notable exception that their mutual dislike had not yet been embittered by deeds of blood. But the dangerous proximity of lawless Arab nobles occupying the fertile district of the Axarafe that skirted the Guadalquivir had early suggested to the renegades the propriety of making thorough preparations for defence. An organization had accordingly been formed, whose members were liable to a summons for active service, and which, in its regulations and military duties, bore a considerable resemblance to the militia of modern times.

The acknowledged chiefs of the Sevillian aristocracy were the sheiks of the two powerful tribes of the Beni-Khaldun and the Beni-Hadjadj. Their estates comprised the most valuable and productive lands in the vicinity of the Andalusian capital. In some respects the Arab prejudice against the promotion of trade and the employment of the mechanical arts had been relaxed, and the proud descendants of the Bedouins of Yemen did not consider it inconsistent with their dignity to add to their resources by the freighting of ships, the buying and selling of merchandise, and the fabrication of weapons and armor. The wealth derived from these profitable occupations, added to the income of their vast plantations, enabled them to maintain a state that eclipsed even the regal splendor of the court of Cordova. Faithful to the pastoral traditions of their race, these princely nobles passed the greater portion of their time at their country-seats; but they also maintained palatial establishments in the city, whither they resorted on Fridays to attend the services of the mosque and to dazzle the eyes and provoke the envy and indignation of the populace by the magnificence of their attire and the insolence of their manners.

It is proverbial that the ordinary tendency of opulence and prosperity is rather to allay than to stimulate the passions of ambition and independence. A notable exception to this principle existed in the case of the Arab aristocracy of Seville. The wealthiest and most epicurean in its tastes of any in the kingdom, it was at the same time the most narrow, belligerent, and exclusive. The persistent evils of the Desert—the love of warfare, the Bedouin repugnance to royal power, which seemed to imply undue superiority on the one hand and an appearance of servitude on the other—outweighed all considerations of security, all the advantages of peace. This propensity to disturbance was largely confined to those who resided in the country, where a marked contraction of intellect and a tenacity of prejudice have always been the well-known characteristics of those who pass their lives amidst scenes unaffected by the collision of interests, the bustle, the enterprise, the ever-changing panorama, of metropolitan life. The Arabs of Seville regarded the impatience of their brethren of the Axarafe with a disapproval which not even tribal attachment and ancestral pride could overcome. But their numbers were small and their influence inappreciable when compared with the great power of the rural noble whose multitudes of slaves and vassals imparted to his seat the appearance of the capital of a principality.

Despite all their pretensions, the blood of many of these lords had been contaminated by an impure commerce with the infidel. The family-tree of the Beni-Khaldun showed numerous crosses which had greatly deteriorated the pure stock of the nobility of Hadramaut. The Beni-Hadjadj traced their pedigree in the maternal line from the royal family of the Visigoths. The admixture of Christian blood had, however, no visible effect in softening their manners, and they were at heart as lawless as the most savage Bedouin who still adored the idols of the Age of Ignorance, and regularly plundered the caravans between Medina and Mecca.

The head of the Arab faction at Seville was Koraib, sheik of the Beni-Khaldun. In talent for political intrigue, in unblushing effrontery, in bigoted devotion to what he considered the honor of the tribe, he stood without a rival. For many years he had nursed in secret a dream of independence, to be realized by violence and rapine. Personal ambition does not seem to have had any part in his plan of universal disorder. An unreasoning hatred of royalty and a mad aspiration to restore the freedom of pre-Islamic times appear to have been the only motives that actuated this dangerous agitator, whose intellect was too much obscured by rancor and prejudice to perceive that the only safeguard of his own possessions lay in the preservation of a strong and arbitrary government.

Repulsed by his countrymen in the city, Koraib turned his attention to the inhabitants of the suburbs. His influence was so extensive and his cause so popular in the Axarafe that it was not long before he found himself in a condition to take the offensive. Many influential Arab and Berber sheiks promised their co-operation. The rich spoils of the province of Seville were offered to the Berbers of Merida, and to the outlaws who swarmed in the fastnesses of the Sierra Morena. The signal given, these merciless savages poured down upon the fields and habitations of the defenceless peasantry. With amazement and terror the industrious farmer saw the accumulations of a lifetime swept away in a moment, his home given to the torch, his sons butchered in cold blood, his wife and daughters dragged into slavery. At the first appearance of the enemy, the governor had summoned all the neighboring chieftains to join him with their retainers. Among these was Koraib, who, in consequence of a previous understanding with the Berbers, deserted at a favorable opportunity. In the first encounter the rebels obtained a complete victory, and, having plundered the country at will, they returned to Merida, leaving the environs of Seville in the condition of a conquered province which had undergone all the injury that barbarian ruthlessness could inflict.

Information of this successful enterprise was soon conveyed to the lair of every brigand and outlaw in the Peninsula. While long since aware of the weakness of the emirate and the military incapacity of its sovereign, the banditti had nevertheless hesitated to approach the neighborhood of large towns like Seville, and their depredations had been confined to isolated hamlets and the highways connecting the provincial capitals with the seaboard. Now, however, a wider field was opened to their indulgence of their predatory instincts. From every quarter of the compass armed desperadoes and criminals, accustomed from childhood to deeds of cruelty and rapine, made their way singly, and in companies, to the province of Seville. The entire country was laid under contribution. The peasantry abandoned their possessions and fled with their families to the metropolis. The powerful chieftains of Lusitania and Estramadura, who had thrown off the yoke of the emirate but had for years been content to govern their principalities in peaceful independence, now hastened to secure a share of the plunder. The renegade, Ibn-Merwan, whose exploits under a preceding reign have already been recounted, descended upon the plains of Andalusia at the head of the fierce warriors of Badajoz.

The provincial governors, as incompetent as their master, were unable or unwilling to repress the prevalent anarchy. That apparently hopeless task was finally performed by Ibn-Ghalib, a Muwallad of Ecija, whose abilities and courage in a few months restored comparative order throughout Andalusia.

The prestige thus attained by one of the despised race that the malevolent prejudice of party had devoted to extermination was especially odious to the Arab aristocracy. The contest which was raging between the rival castes for self-preservation on the one hand, and absolute supremacy on the other, now became more sanguinary and irreconcilable. The cities were filled with tumult. The Emir was openly insulted. The influence of the Arab faction in the Divan prevailed in the end, and Ibn-Ghalib was sacrificed by an act of treachery to the hatred of his enemies through his zeal for his master's interests.

The news of his death provoked an insurrection at Seville. The sympathies of the people had been with him in his quarrel with the Arab nobles. Many causes contributed to his popularity. He was a renegade, and his political interests were identified with those of a majority of the citizens. Large numbers of the natives of the province had served under his banner. He had swept brigandage from the highways. In consequence of his vigorous measures trade had revived, and public confidence had, to a certain degree, been restored. Not only his partisans, but even those who from policy had hitherto remained neutral, now clamored for the heads of his murderers. The city was in the hands of an infuriated mob. The governor was besieged in his palace. It required all the resources of the government to suppress the outbreak, which, for a time, threatened the most serious results. A terrible retribution was exacted of all taken in arms, or suspected of having accorded to the insurrection aid or sympathy. The leaders of the Muwallad faction, the most prominent merchants of the city, were decapitated or crucified. Many of the unfortunates who had escaped the blind fury of the pursuit were deliberately massacred. Their houses were abandoned to the avarice, their harems to the lust, of the brutal soldiery. It required all the influence of leading members of the successful party, little given to the exercise of clemency, to check the indiscriminate slaughter of their unhappy neighbors. The cessation of hostilities was, however, only temporary. Mutual acts of violence renewed the deadly struggle between contending factions. The province was at length abandoned to the Arabs by the weakness of the court. History shrinks from the task of recording the outrages and the tortures of barbarians inaccessible to pity and unrestrained by any law of God or man. Suffice it to say the Muwallads of Seville were annihilated. The memories of a catastrophe which produced a profound impression on the politics of the Peninsula are still discernible in the traditions and minstrelsy of the South of Spain.

The Arab faction was now triumphant. The balance of power had been destroyed. The Christians of Cordova, persuaded that the end of the Moslem domination was at hand, made overtures to Ibn-Hafsun, whose former affiliations and present influence seemed to point to him as their deliverer, an advantage which he was not slow to recognize.

The consciousness of great talents; the uniform success which had attended his operations; the virtual control of the most opulent provinces of the Peninsula; and the boundless, almost servile, devotion of his followers, now prompted Ibn-Hafsun to aspire to the rights as well as the actual possession of absolute power. With this end in view, he sent an embassy, laden with costly presents, to the Abbaside Viceroy of Africa, offering to become the vassal of the Eastern Khalifate in return for the commission of Emir of Spain. The application was forwarded to Bagdad, and Ibn-Hafsun was encouraged to expect the speedy fulfilment of his hopes.

This ominous design had not been conducted so secretly as to escape the knowledge of the court. Abdallah perceived at a glance the imminent peril that menaced his throne. There was little doubt that the consideration acquired by the vassal of the Abbasides would at once invest with dignity and authority the renegade chieftain, whose pretensions grounded upon force were still deficient in the indispensable requisite of legality. The jurisdiction of the emirate was not recognized beyond the actual confines of the capital. The palace was infested with traitors. An active and fanatical sect was distributed throughout the city conveying secret information to the enemy, and im-patiently expecting the moment when they might exact retribution at once for the humiliation of conquest and the wrongs of persecution. In his extremity the Emir endeavored, but in vain, to conciliate his foe. Foiled in this attempt, he resolved to risk an appeal to arms. His decision was heard by the Divan with unconcealed dismay, but their remonstrances were unheeded. In the abject nature of Abdallah, degraded by superstition and haunted by the memory of atrocious crimes, an heroic sentiment, born of despair, had at last arisen. When intelligence of his determination to substitute for the pusillanimous policy he had hitherto employed the hazardous experiment of the sword was conveyed to Ibn-Hafsun, his surprise was provoked to the point of incredulity. But when he was told that the advance guard of the hostile troops was in motion, and that the royal pavilion had been pitched in the plain of Secunda to await the arrival of the sovereign, he no longer doubted the truth of a report which seemed to be a certain presage of victory. The insurgent army mustered thirty thousand strong. It was composed of veterans who knew no home but the camp, no pleasure but the excitement of battle, no law but the command of their general. The royal force, on the other hand, numbered scarce fourteen thousand men. One-third of these were the guards of the Emir; the remainder was composed of raw recruits whose courage and fidelity could not be depended upon in the hour of trial.

The two armies met near Aguilar. Whatever hesitation the inexperienced soldiers of the emirate may have previously manifested, none flinched in the presence of the enemy. Their courage was nerved to desperation when they remembered that defeat meant death, for Ibn-Hafsun never gave quarter. The efforts of the combatants were encouraged by the exhortations of the imams and the prelates, who fearlessly exposed their unprotected persons in the thickest of the fight. The rebel lines were broken by the furious charge of Abdallah's troops. Once in confusion, they could not be rallied, and, dispersed in every direction, they fell by thousands under the weapons of their pursuers. Their leader, having narrowly escaped capture, with difficulty succeeded in reaching his mountain stronghold.

An abundant and acceptable supply of arms, treasure, and munitions of war came into the possession of Abdallah by the capture of Aguilar. A thousand renegade Christians who preferred death to a second apostasy were beheaded. The moral effect of the victory was important and widespread. Ecija was taken after a short resistance. Archidona and Jaen voluntarily implored the clemency of the conqueror. The Viceroy of Africa notified the discomfited renegade at Bobastro that his pretensions to the Spanish Emirate, under the auspices of the Khalifate of Bagdad, could no longer be entertained. The friends of order of every faction—the nobles, the merchants, the proprietors of large estates, the artisans, and the peasantry—for a moment regained confidence in a cause which they had recently considered as hopelessly lost.

This flattering prospect was, however, soon clouded by fresh disasters. The reverse sustained by Ibn-Hafsun was temporary, and had not seriously affected either his popularity or power. With little effort he succeeded, in a measure, in re-establishing his authority. The lost cities were retaken through treachery or by force. The royal governors were decapitated, as an intimation to the monarch that his appointees were to be classed as rebels, the servants of a usurper. The Arab party of Granada was beaten in a great battle, and its influence forever destroyed. The reviving fortunes of Ibn-Hafsun had produced a strong reaction in his favor when his renunciation of Islamism—an act of mistaken policy which, without gaining the respect of the Christians, made him an object of aversion to every Mussulman—effected greater injury to his cause than a score of defeats could have accomplished. The last nine years of Abdallah's life were the least turbulent of his reign. The substantial aid afforded by the Arab nobles, at last convinced of their dependence on the crown, had restored the languishing authority of the emirate.

Radical changes had been produced in the political complexion and social condition of the Peninsula by a generation of civil war. Factions had been practically exterminated. All the great leaders, save one, had been removed by age, disease, or assassination. The motive of the original sedition had long been forgotten. Religion had become the nominal incentive to hostility. The enthusiasm of the clansman aspiring to independence had been supplanted by the avarice of the brigand eager for rapine. The general character of the subjects of the emirate had undergone a complete metamorphosis. They had lost the ferocious and uncompromising spirit of their ancestors. They were no longer oppressed by the tyranny of the monarch, whose helplessness and imbecility everywhere provoked public contempt. The enmity with which the members of opposing parties regarded each other was rather apparent than real. Their military operations were languidly prosecuted. Their encounters were often bloodless. Familiarity with disorder induced many to consider it the natural condition of society. The vitality of the royal power seemed proof against all the resources of treason and violence. Thousands of lives had been sacrificed in futile attempts to overturn a government whose support rested neither upon the valor of its soldiery, the genius of its statesmen, nor the affections of its people.

The sober sense of the masses, chastened by misfortune, eventually caused them to reflect upon the advantages of submission to authority and the restoration of order. Insubordination had brought nothing but distress. The great works of the founders of the dynasty—souvenirs of former prosperity and renown—were everywhere around them. Principles of vital importance to their forefathers were but meaningless names to the present generation. These considerations first affected communities whose commercial interests were seriously involved. A number of the provincial capitals voluntarily returned to their allegiance. Gradually other towns followed their example. Even in the mountain fastnesses the spirit of returning loyalty began to assert itself. Anarchy and exhaustion effected what force was powerless to accomplish, and the close of the administration of one of the worst of Moslem princes was characterized by a degree of tranquillity unknown to those of many of his race eminently distinguished for their genius and their virtues.

During all these internal commotions, the peace existing between the courts of Oviedo and Cordova was never broken by hostilities of a serious character, a circumstance that contributed largely to the preservation of the Moslem empire. Everything seemed to indicate at least a respite from the evils that had so long afflicted the people and harassed the government, when Abdallah suddenly expired, in the sixty-ninth year of his age.

The relation of the monotonous and sanguinary events of this period is valuable, in a philosophical point of view, in determining the real causes of the decadence of the Mohammedan power in Western Europe. The chronicle of the reign of Abdallah, the

Emir, is in reality the story of Ibn-Hafsun, the renegade. Yet this enterprising partisan was indebted for his fame far less to his own abilities, conspicuous as they were, than to the disputes and jealousies of his enemies. These effects of tribal prejudice made possible the organization of a troop of banditti that a single squadron of cavalry, properly directed, would have been sufficient to disperse. The spirit of insubordination became contagious; the governors of remote provinces threw off their allegiance; the sources of public revenue were obstructed; repeated disasters shook the precarious loyalty of powerful chieftains, whose barbaric traditions deluded them with the fallacious hope of independence; the fires of religious discord were kindled in every community; and the government, deprived of its subjects, seemed repeatedly on the verge of dissolution. The character of the sovereign was, in a measure, responsible for many of the most serious disasters of his reign. It possessed no qualities that could inspire the respect or elicit the approbation of either friend or foe. Abdallah was a miserable compound of hypocrite and poltroon. His title had been obtained by fratricide. The crime had been attended with circumstances which heightened its atrocity. Popular rumor attributed to him the murder of two of his sons. Without faith, he betrayed in turn both his allies and his enemies. He neglected the appeals of devoted adherents whose fidelity had long been proof against temptation. He suffered himself to be deceived by the representations of rebels whom experience had shown to be wholly devoid of truth and honor. He possessed neither the capacity of the general nor the courage which is an indispensable attribute of the common soldier. His impiety was so universally recognized that it was the favorite theme of satirical poets, and even the imams frequently omitted to mention his name in the khotba, or public prayer. Little wonder was it that, under such a ruler, the Emirate of Cordova should have reached the lowest point in its fortunes to which it was reduced before its final overthrow. The authority of the crown was everywhere disputed. The great cities, —Seville, Cadiz, Toledo, Jaen, Granada, Valencia, Saragossa,—whose power and glory had been the pride of former ages, no longer sent their rich tributes to the capital on the Guadalquivir. The slumbers of the citizens of Cordova were nightly disturbed by the shrieks of peasants dying under the weapons of banditti, and by the lurid glare of burning villages that lighted up the landscape with the brilliancy of noonday. Traffic disappeared from the highways. The markets were empty and deserted. The prevalent insecurity had suspended the operations of agriculture, and the necessaries of life became luxuries attainable only by the rich. In many localities famine-stricken wretches fed, with ghastly satisfaction, upon the bodies of their friends and neighbors. These deplorable conditions were aggravated by the denunciations and prophecies of the ministers of religion, who, with characteristic audacity, shifted the blame for public misfortune upon those who were in reality its victims, and called down upon the heads of a sinful and pleasure-loving people the long-deferred but inexorable wrath of an avenging God.

CHAPTER XII

REIGN OF ABD-AL-RAHMAN III.

912–961

Eminent Qualities of the New Ruler—His Firmness—Rapid Subjection of the Rebel Territory—Dissensions of the Christians—Defeat of Ibn-Abi-Abda—Death of Ibn-Hafsun—Impaired Power of the Arab Nobles—War with the Fatimites of Africa—Rout of Junquera—Abd-al-Rahman assumes the Title of Khalif—Its Significance—Invasion of Castile—Reverse of Alhandega—Civil Wars of the Christians—The Princes of Leon and Navarre visit the Moslem Court—Abd-al-Rahman dies at the Age of Seventy Years—His Remarkable Achievements—The Greek and German Embassies—The Saracens in France and Italy—The Slaves and their Influence—Plot of Abdallah—Condition of the Country under Abd-al-Rahman III.—Cordova—Its Wealth and Magnificence—The Royal Villas—The City and Palace of Medina-al-Zahrâ—Melancholy Reflections of the Greatest of the Khalifs.

THE sceptre of the emirate had, by the choice of Abdallah, been bequeathed to Abd-al-Rahman, his grandson, to the prejudice of his second son, Al-Modhaffer, who stood next in the order of succession. Mohammed, the heir to the throne, accused of treason, had perished in a dungeon, the victim of the jealousy or the justice of his unfeeling father. The circumstances attending this tragedy, as well as the events which provoked it, are alike involved in uncertainty. That the heir apparent should have allied himself with the Christians, have served under the banner of Ibn-Hafsun, the implacable enemy of his race, and have attempted to overturn the very government which it was his duty as well as his interest to support, seems highly improbable. Yet this is what we are led to infer from the obscure statements of such chronicles as condescend to mention, even with meagre details, this episode of the reign of Abdallah. That the deed was not entirely without justification may be presumed from the fact that the latter has not received, on this account, the denunciation of posterity. Reverence for the greatest sovereign of the Western Empire has silenced the voice of criticism, which might otherwise have arraigned the treachery and ingratitude of a father. These motives have combined to invest with an air of mystery an occurrence whose consequences were so momentous in their subsequent influence on the history of the Peninsula.

The character of the young prince was conspicuous for every excellence which could either be inherited or conferred by education. His person was attractive, his manners affable and urbane, his talents conspicuous in a court renowned for its wit, its learning, and its eloquence. His skill in chivalrous exercises evoked the acclamations of the soldiery. His knowledge of affairs, and his capacity to carry to a successful issue the most delicate transactions of diplomacy, had long been the admiration of venerable and distinguished statesmen. The fond partiality of his grandfather, who was constantly haunted by the memory of a crime induced by political necessity, had caused the youthful heir to the throne to be instructed in all the knowledge to be acquired in the most accomplished and enlightened society of Europe. The fortunate object of this solicitude early demonstrated his eminent fitness for the responsibilities of his exalted destiny. A thirst for knowledge, combined with a precocious sedateness of demeanor tempered by a sprightliness, which, while it had nothing in common with frivolity, yet enlivened the discussion of the most serious and prosaic questions of philosophical research, procured for him the love of the scholars of Cordova, whose opinions were respected by even the barbarian nations of Christendom. The general satisfaction with which the accession of Abd-al-Rahman was received demonstrated not only the propriety of the selection but also the great popularity of the prince. Nothing occurred to disturb the public tranquillity. The members of the royal family, who, with color of right and encouraged by precedent, might have disputed the succession, were the first to attest their loyalty to the new sovereign. A feeling of confidence seemed to pervade all ranks of society, as the result of an event which promised the reconciliation of long-existing enmities; the submission of rebellious vassals; the encouragement of commerce; the security of agriculture; the return of that long-banished and most priceless of blessings, domestic peace. With the natural expectation of these benefits were mingled not unreasonable visions of romantic crusade and foreign conquest. The martial spirit of the nation had been perverted rather than discouraged by the incessant religious and political seditions of nearly half a century. There was scarcely a family in which was not included at least one soldier whose scars gave proof of his acquaintance with the perils and accidents of the field of battle. The people were weary of intestine turmoil. The time was most opportune for the exercise of the talents of a ruler whose tact was equal to his courage, and whose magnanimity rose superior to the mean and selfish gratifications of persecution and revenge. A fortunate combination of circumstances prepared the way for the longest and most brilliant reign of the Ommeyade Khalifate. The spirit of rebellion was broken. Repeated reverses and an impolitic apostasy had impaired the prestige and weakened the once invincible following of the great partisan leader, Ibn-Hafsun. The few surviving heads of the Arab aristocracy had lost the greater part of their influence. Weary of strife, their families decimated, their possessions diminished, the tribesmen of the Koreish began to seriously question the expediency of incessant revolution, whose risks and privations offered such a marked and unfavorable contrast to the undisturbed and luxurious enjoyment of Andalusian civilization. The universal diffusion of knowledge, the free discussion of scientific problems, the numerous schools, the acknowledged supremacy of intellectual acquirements over blind and unreasoning credulity, had perceptibly weakened the power of Islam. The imams saw with dismay the portentous increase of skepticism, which threatened alike the emoluments of their office and the foundations of their faith. The congregations were as numerous, the donations as liberal, the prayers to all appearances as fervent as formerly, but the destructive poison of infidelity permeated and was fast corrupting the entire mass of society. The Christians of the North, who had maintained their independence through the dissensions of their neighbors, were now themselves harassed by disastrous revolutions fomented by aspiring princes who, regardless of the danger which constantly menaced their territory, never hesitated to sacrifice the welfare of the nation for the uncertain dignity of royal power. The ancient realm of the Asturias had spread far beyond the limits of the sierras whose craggy solitudes had protected its infancy, and had expanded into the kingdoms of Leon and Navarre, whose petty monarchs wasted in attacks upon each other the energy and the treasure which would have been more profitably employed in thwarting the ambitious designs of the infidel.

The crafty and vacillating policy of Abdallah, who was ignorant of the art of either conciliating or punishing his enemies, and whose crimes excited the abhorrence of his rebellious subjects while they failed to arouse their apprehensions, was repugnant to the open and fearless nature of Abd-al-Rahman. The former had contented himself with the doubtful evidence of vassalage implied by the payment of tribute. But the lofty spirit of his grandson was not to be satisfied with this ambiguous concession to sovereignty. No sooner had he ascended the throne than he issued a proclamation requiring the unconditional submission of his subjects, regardless of previous affiliations of race or religion. To such as properly acknowledged his title he extended his clemency; but those who persisted in defiance of the law and in resistance to the constituted authority, he declared should be removed beyond the pale of indulgence or mercy. This firmness, which, in view of recent events and the power exercised by rebel chieftains, seemed to partake of imprudence, not to say of audacity, soon justified the wisdom and foresight of the prince who adopted it. The large cities, whose population was most affected by the evils of anarchy, were the first to return to their allegiance. Ecija, Jaen, Archidona, and Elvira, whose seditions had long vexed the peace of the empire, were the first places of importance to open their gates to the new sovereign. The provinces of which the cities of Jaen and Elvira were the capitals, dotted with countless strongholds and infested with partisans leagued with Ibn-Hafsun, still, however, refused to abandon their habits of rapine; and Abd-al-Rahman prepared, in person, to reduce to subjection these turbulent vassals, whose habits of independence, confirmed by almost unbroken success, had induced them to regard their arms as invincible. But the bandit chieftains of the Sierra Nevada and the Serrania de Ronda had not taken into consideration the changes which had occurred in the rude society to which they themselves belonged. The strong personality and remarkable achievements of Ibn-Hafsun had hitherto kept united the lawless elements, which, collected from every province of Africa and Spain, had found a secure refuge in the mountains of Andalusia. Now, however, the apostasy of their leader had diminished the confidence and relaxed the enthusiasm of his followers. His summons to arms was unheeded, or obeyed with ill-concealed marks of disaffection. The depleted ranks of his army forced him to the employment of Berber mercenaries, barbarians wholly destitute of attachment to the cause they served, and who were always liable in the crisis of a battle to desert to the enemy under the promise of higher pay. The knowledge that they might, in the future, be enrolled in the ranks of their present adversaries, thus hampered their efforts, and induced them to inflict the least possible damage upon their tribesmen who fought under the standard of the Emir. From furious battles, in which were often exhibited feats of prowess worthy of a more chivalrous age, the conflicts with the brigands of the sierras had become noisy and harmless encounters, without spirit and without bloodshed. A feeling of mutual distrust, which needed little provocation to ripen into acts of open hostility, was engendered between Ibn-Hafsun and his subjects. A growing sense of insecurity had, years before, caused the rebel leader to swear allegiance to Obeydallah, the Schiite prince of Africa. Exasperated by this confession of weakness, the officers of the army were further alienated by the gifts and honors lavished upon the Pagan mercenaries, who had supplanted in the favor of their commander the tried veterans of many campaigns.

For thirty years the Spanish and Berber elements had exhausted every resource in futile attempts to shake off the Arab yoke. No decisive victory had ever attended their arms. The struggle never rose above a merciless guerilla warfare. A large part of the province of Andalusia was depopulated. Peasants were massacred by thousands. Harvests were wantonly destroyed. Whenever a town was surprised or taken by storm, the entire population was butchered. And yet, despite all their efforts, the savage outlaws, who posed as the deliverers of the Peninsula, seemed no nearer the attainment of their professed object than at the beginning. In fact, with all his courage, activity, and address, Ibn-Hafsun was deficient in the qualities indispensable to leaders who aspire to organize revolutions and found great dynasties. His chieftains were often guilty of flagrant insubordination. Some, confiding in the impregnable situation of their castles, even proclaimed their independence. The great body of the peasantry—whose fathers had sympathized with the cause of rebellion and had been plundered and murdered by their nominal protectors—regarded the mountain robbers with unspeakable dread and abhorrence. To them the disadvantages attending the exercise of despotic power were trifling in comparison with the evils by which they were constantly menaced. Similar sentiments had begun of late to be secretly entertained by quite a respectable number of the brigands themselves. The disaffection of the latter was increased by fears of the ultimate restoration of Christianity.

Like all apostates, Ibn-Hafsun hastened to signalize his conversion and confirm his sincerity by conspicuous acts of oppression. Renunciation of Islamism was encouraged by promises of military honors and high employments. Moslem officers of distinguished merit were neglected or regarded with disfavor. To the horror of the disciples of Mohammed, costly churches rose upon the sites of mosques which had existed since the Conquest. The court of Ibn-Hafsun became the resort of ascetics, who from conviction or policy aspired to martyrdom, and openly performed, to the disgust of the orthodox beholder, the revolting severities of monastic discipline. The daughter of the rebel chief herself retired to a cloister, whence she was, years afterwards, dragged forth to pay the penalty of apostasy, a fate eagerly welcomed as the fulfilment of a prophecy pronounced by a vagrant monk. The cause which popular enthusiasm had once invested with a national character, supported by the traditions of Iberian, Roman, and Gothic dominion, and which held out delusive hopes of national independence, had disappeared in the atrocities of the worst of all struggles, a religious war conducted by renegades. Another powerful element, once allied in sympathy with the party of Ibn-Hafsun, was now with unbroken unanimity arrayed against him. The Conquest had brought relief and liberty to many thousands of families that for generations had groaned under the oppressions of slavery and serfdom. The remembrance of their sufferings had been bequeathed to their descendants, and the knowledge that the restoration of the Christian religion would certainly be accompanied with the enactment of laws depriving them of the freedom they enjoyed, confirmed the loyalty of the latter, which had been temporarily shaken by the disorders of the emirate. With feelings of mingled apprehension and gratitude, they compared their present condition with the degradation and miseries of their ancestors, whose most tyrannical masters had been found in the ranks of the ecclesiastical order, now seeking by every art of intrigue the re-establishment of the supremacy of their Church, the recovery of their confiscated lands, and the restoration of their ancient and irresponsible privileges. The bold front presented by the rebel forces was formidable only in appearance. The disintegration of the faction which had more than once threatened the Moslem capital and the throne of the West was complete. It needed but the presence of the sovereign to expose the hopeless condition of an already abandoned cause. Such was the state of society in the disaffected territory of the emirate, and such the character of the adversaries with whom the youthful Abd-al-Rahman was now called upon to contend.

The appearance of the royal standard was the signal for the voluntary surrender of the greater part of the provinces of Jaen and Elvira. The castles which had long been the seat of outlawry and brigandage were razed. As soon as the open country had been secured, Abd-al-Rahman pushed forward without hesitation into the heart of the sierra. At first he met with stubborn opposition, but the capture of the strong town of Finana was followed by the submission of every chieftain whose proximity to the scene of action led him to fear the exemplary vengeance of an exasperated master. In less than three months not a single castle in the Sierra Nevada remained in possession of the insurgents. Instructed by the experience of his predecessors, Abd-al-Rahman adopted the most prudent and effective means for retaining his conquests. The governors and their families were removed to Cordova. The rebel garrisons were replaced by veterans whose fidelity was unquestioned. Pardon was granted to all, excepting such as had rendered themselves undeserving of clemency by the commission of atrocious crimes. The dignity of the crown was further secured by the re-establishment of judicial tribunals and the appointment of magistrates whose reputation and experience were a guaranty of the faithful discharge of their duties. The moral effect of these politic measures, the amiable character of Abd-al-Rahman, and the reputation he enjoyed for justice accomplished as much for the pacification of the hostile territory as the fear inspired by his arms. His first important act after assuming the regal office was the remission of taxes, which, imposed by the necessities or the avarice of his predecessors, weighed heavily upon a distracted and impoverished people. The general amnesty which he had proclaimed; his solicitude for the welfare of his subjects; his firmness in dealing with those who disputed his authority; the spirit he manifested by appearing at the head of his troops, who for years had not seen the face of their sovereign; the physical attributes with which nature had adorned a noble and majestic presence, all conspired to captivate the imagination and inspire the respect of both the civilians and the soldiery. A confidence mingled with enthusiasm and reverence was awakened at his approach, and the useful members of every community, disheartened by years of turmoil and misfortune, welcomed each bloodless and decisive victory of the youthful monarch as an additional harbinger of a peaceful and prosperous reign.

The city of Seville, now governed by the powerful family of the Beni-Hadjadj, while a nominal dependency of the emirate, was, in all respects save this dubious mark of subordination, the seat of an independent principality. The authority of the Emir was not recognized within its walls. The Divan had no voice in the appointment of the officers charged with its government. The levying of troops for service under the royal banners rested entirely upon the caprice or discretion of the Arab princes, who had wrested from an enfeebled dynasty the richest province of the empire. Even the collection of the annual tax was considered a mere act of condescension and courtesy, a privilege liable to be revoked at the pleasure of the haughty tributary. But discord, arising from the ambitious and irreconcilable pretensions of the Arab aristocracy, had invaded the councils of the Beni-Hadjadj. The order of succession had been broken, and, through fortune or by superior abilities, a collateral branch of the Koreishite family which claimed the sovereignty had been elevated to power. The unsuccessful competitor, Mohammed, sought the camp of the Emir, promising his homage in consideration of assistance. The dignity of Abd-al-Rahman not permitting him to countenance the equality of a rebellious subject, the offer was rejected, but the Arab noble was graciously permitted to enlist as a volunteer. A formidable army besieged Seville, and Ibn-Maslama, the ruling prince of the House of Hadjadj, saw with concern his newly acquired dignity menaced with destruction. In his extremity he applied to Ibn-Hafsun. An attempt by the latter to raise the siege resulted in the annihilation of his army, and the insurgent leader, whose name had lost its terrors, fled with a handful of followers to the fortress of Bobastro. Not long after this event, abandoned by his allies and already feeling the pangs of famine, Ibn-Maslama capitulated. Encouraged by his success, with no enemy in his rear and the vast resources of the South at his command, the way was now open to the Emir to carry the war into the Serrania de Ronda, and to retaliate upon Ibn-Hafsun those calamities which he had so long and so ruthlessly inflicted upon the defenceless peasantry of Andalusia. His preparations were made with all the prudence and sagacity of an experienced general. The bulk of the population of the sierra was attached by interest or conviction to the dogmas of the Christian faith, and the natural courage of the mountaineer was animated by assurances of divine aid and a burning desire for martyrdom. From the moment when he penetrated into the defiles that traversed the domain of Ibn-Hafsun, the Emir experienced a determined resistance. His foraging parties were ambushed and cut off. His convoys were intercepted. Having formed the siege of Tolox, where Ibn-Hafsun commanded in person, a sudden sally of the garrison was planned with such boldness and success that a panic seized the army, and a great disaster was narrowly averted. But the genius and perseverance of Abd-al-Rahman eventually triumphed over all obstacles. Tolox was taken. Castle after castle was stormed and demolished. The supplies of the insurgents were exhausted, and they were compelled to have recourse to the granaries of Africa. The foresight of the Emir had, however, anticipated this measure of the enemy. The vigilance of his cruisers blasted the hopes of the famishing rebels, and the captured ships were added to the navy patrolling the Mediterranean, while the provisions were conveyed to the royal camp. In time a considerable extent of mountain territory was conquered; the cities of Orihuela and Niebla, whose alluvial regions boasted an almost perennial harvest, were again added to the dominions of the crown; the tradesmen and the peasantry, alike weary of the contributions levied by relentless brigandage, zealously co-operated with the imperial magistrates in the restoration of order; and Abd-al-Rahman, satisfied with the result of his first campaign and secure against any attempt upon the capital, now began to meditate an expedition into the Christian provinces of the North.

The truce negotiated between Abdallah and Alfonso III. was long preserved by the political necessities which had originally dictated its provisions. The Emir was fully occupied in a desperate attempt to retain his crown amidst the commotions of almost universal rebellion and anarchy. The Christian monarchs were unable to take advantage of the helpless position of their adversary, on account of the plots and crimes of princes of the royal house, the intrigues of the clergy, and the insubordination of ambitious vassals. Alfonso III., compelled by the unnatural cruelty and ingratitude of his sons to anticipate the course of nature by resigning the supreme dignity, had descended into the grave, broken rather by domestic sorrows than by the infirmities of age. His efforts, when forced to an untimely abdication, had been directed with many forebodings of evil to an equitable partition of his dominions. His three eldest sons shared between them the principalities of the royal patrimony. Garcia received Leon, to Ordoño was allotted Galicia, Fruela remained at Oviedo. From this epoch dates the origin of the kingdom of Leon, which, by its proximity to the frontier and its more advantageous situation, soon absorbed and eventually eclipsed the dignity and importance of its rivals. The short reign of Garcia was occupied by a succession of expeditions into the enemy's country, which seem to have been attended with no decisive results. Dying, after three years, without issue, his brother Ordoño received the votes of the council, and was raised to the vacant throne amidst the acclamations of the people. Thus the State of Galicia was merged into that of Leon, and the two, henceforth existing under the name of the latter, became in time an integral portion of the Spanish monarchy. Ordoño was already renowned for his valor in an age of military heroism and romantic enterprise. His accession was signalized by a foray which laid waste the flourishing province of Merida. Pursuing the savage policy inaugurated by Alfonso, he massacred all taken in arms, and enslaved the non-combatants who were so unfortunate as to fall into his hands. His retreat was purchased by the inhabitants of Badajoz, who, collecting an immense treasure—to which the members of the ecclesiastical order were unwilling but important contributors—induced him to retire. Upon his return to the capital, he devoted a considerable portion of the booty to the foundation of a church, dedicated to the Virgin in acknowledgment of her influence and protection, to which he attributed the auspicious commencement of his reign.

Although the territory which had suffered from the recent incursion of the Christians formed part of that region which still refused to acknowledge his authority, Abd-al-Rahman was not slow to perceive the advantages which must accrue to him from assuming the championship of those who were nominally his enemies. The cause was one of vital importance to all professing the religion of Mohammed. The dignity of the emirate had been insulted by a troop of marauding barbarians, whom the polished Arabs of Cordova with justice considered their inferiors even in feats of martial prowess, and who, if secure of immunity, would not only extend their ravages further, but also contract a profound contempt for the inactive and pusillanimous character of their adversaries. The fickle attachment of the insurgents of the West might be regained, or at least their gratitude aroused, by a demonstration in their favor; and the moral effect upon the enemies as well as upon the partisans of the crown could not fail to be of great and permanent value. An army was equipped and despatched under Ibn-Abi-Abda to lay waste the plains of Leon. For fifteen years the Moslem standards had not been seen on Christian soil, and the swarthy battalions of Abd-al-Rahman, scarcely known except by fame to the subjects of Ordoño, were the source of almost as much terror to the superstitious peasantry as were their ancestors who served under the banner of the redoubtable Tarik. The venture of the Emir was rewarded with abundant booty; the avarice of the soldiery was at once aroused and gratified; and, in the ensuing year, another expedition, organized on a much larger scale, under pretext of avenging the wrongs of the oppressed people of the border, but in reality assembled for purposes of rapine, entered the dominions of the Christian king. Unfortunately for its success, the bulk of the army was composed of Berber mercenaries—adepts in the arts of robbery and murder, but deficient in the constancy and courage requisite for the maintenance of a protracted conflict—and of refugees not inferior in insubordination and poltroonery to their companions in arms. This mob soon proved unequal to sustain the determined assaults of the Leonese cavalry; the Arabs were attacked in their camp before San Estevan, and a fearful defeat, with the loss of his general, announced to the Emir the fatal policy of employing a herd of truculent barbarians, without experience, discipline, or courage, to re-establish the credit and assert the power of the Moslem arms.

The discouraging effects of this reverse were, to some extent, counterbalanced by the intelligence of the death of Ibn-Hafsun, whose operations had harassed, and whose ambition had menaced, the reigns of three Moslem sovereigns. With the disappearance of their most implacable enemy, the inhabitants of Andalusia flattered themselves that they could hereafter pursue their avocations unmolested and enjoy the results of their industry, hitherto subject to the extortions and depredations of unrestricted brigandage. But the fallacy of these hopes was soon demonstrated. The sons of the renowned partisan leader, Giafar, Abd-al-Rahman, Suleyman, and Hafs, who inherited all his audacity and no small share of his military genius, sustained for ten years longer the unequal and hopeless struggle. The wretched peasantry were again compelled to acknowledge the weakness of the government and the uncertain tenure by which they held their property and their lives. Gradually, however, the resources of the emirate, directed by a firm and skilful hand, began to prevail in the Serrania. Three of the sons of Ibn-Hafsun were removed by voluntary retirement, by death in battle, by murder provoked by a double apostasy. The survivor Hafs, reduced to extremity by the siege of Bobastro, submitted, and, having become a loyal subject, served afterwards with distinction in the imperial army. The fanatics who followed in the train of the Emir, actuated by all the malignity of their kind, caused the tombs of Ibn-Hafsun and Giafar to be opened; and Abd-al-Rahman, having learned that the bodies had been interred according to the customs of the infidel, ordered them to be nailed to stakes before the principal gate of Cordova. The surrender of Bobastro was soon followed by the submission of the entire Serrania. In the mean time, the insurgent chieftains of the mountains of Priego, of Alicante, and other cities of the opulent provinces of Tadmir, Merida, Santarem, Beja, and finally of Badajoz, made humble professions of fealty and obedience to the conqueror.

The rebel territory, which, not many years before, had extended almost to the walls of the capital, was now limited to the narrow area inclosed by the fortifications of Toledo. Anxious to avoid bloodshed, the Emir attempted to open negotiations for the surrender of the city without resorting to force. But his overtures were rejected; the Toledans, whose natural inclination to turbulence had been encouraged by long impunity, and whose taste for a lawless independence had been strengthened by its enjoyment, dismissed the royal envoys with haughty disdain. Abd-al-Rahman at once proceeded to invest the city. The suburbs were devastated. All supplies were intercepted by a close blockade. The sallies of the besieged were repulsed at every point. Their last hope vanished with the defeat of a Christian army sent by the King of Leon to assist them, and the distressed city, after an obstinate resistance lasting two years, capitulated.

The fierce and bloody struggle which had decimated communities, destroyed the accumulations of industry, and retarded national progress for nearly half a century was finally at an end. From the confines of the County of Barcelona to the shores of the Atlantic, from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean, the authority of Abd-al-Rahman was now acknowledged as supreme. The danger of successful rebellion had disappeared with the name and fortunes of Ibn-Hafsun. Since the time of Sertorius, no leader had so ably defended the cause of the Spanish people. The effect of the protracted contest in which the latter had participated had been to raise them from the position of outcasts to an equality with their ancient oppressors. The brigand chief of the sierras had been, in a measure, the peculiar champion of their rights. Though long a Moslem, his following had consisted largely of Christians, and he had finally been received into their communion. His sagacity and generous confidence had entrusted them with important civil offices, with the conduct of delicate negotiations, with embassies to Africa, with the command of armies. Experience in warfare had brought with it the civilizing influences which develop, even in the midst of destruction, increased intelligence, a more tolerant spirit, a higher sense of personal dignity and honor. Accustomed from the earliest times to an arbitrary government, while nominally fighting for liberty, they yet saw nothing repugnant in the despotism of the emirate. But it was different with the Koreishite nobles, whose arrogant pretensions had provoked and precipitated the long series of calamities now happily terminated. The licentious freedom of the Desert was their ideal, the salutary restraints of authority their aversion. The haughty pride engendered and transmitted through countless generations of chieftains in whose veins coursed the purest blood of Arabia, and whose achievements were recounted in the passionate strains of famous poets, induced them to regard with ineffable disdain, and to subject to every indignity, all who were not members of their exclusive caste. The day of these insolent lords was now over. Of all the parties whose quarrels had distracted society theirs had fared the worst. Never strong in numbers, their ranks had been thinned by the ordinary casualties of war; by the evils inseparable from poverty; by summary executions for treason. Their power had been so effectually destroyed that they appear no more as a disturbing element in the annals of the Peninsula. Submitting, although with reluctance, to the force of necessity, they by degrees contracted alliances with the faction once the object of their scorn, and lent their unwilling aid to the noble project of Abd-al-Rahman, which aimed at a complete fusion of races and the obliteration of hereditary feuds and ancient prejudices. The last important constituent of the population, the Berbers, preserved, under apparent conformity to custom, their character of mercenary and idolatrous barbarians, who, not amenable to the benefits of peace, were destined erelong to demonstrate the suicidal policy which had introduced such perfidious allies into the heart of the empire.

The pacification of the dominions of Abd-al-Rahman had not been perfected a moment too soon. An enemy more dangerous than any that had yet menaced the throne of the Ommeyades had appeared on the coast of Africa. The Ismailians, a branch of the Schiite sect reformed by a shrewd and ambitious charlatan in Persia, had, through its missionaries, supplanted the dynasty of the Aghlabites, and now ruled, with a splendor heretofore unknown in that country, the opulent and fertile strip of territory extending from Mauritania to Egypt. The same motives, the same aspirations to supreme power disguised under professions of religious reformation which had prevailed in Spain, inspired the leaders of this moral and political revolution. The tyranny and pride of the Arab nobles had caused the formation of secret societies, organized ostensibly for the purification of the faith and the benefit of the oppressed, but in reality to further the treasonable designs of able and daring conspirators. The hypocrisy of the latter, who in secret scoffed at all religion, may be gathered from the following saying current among them: "Prophets are nothing but impostors, whose real object is to obtain pre-eminence over other men."

The Fatimite dynasty in Africa had risen to power with a rapidity astonishing even to an age accustomed to the ever-varying phenomena of Moslem revolution. Its head, Obeydallah, who traced a fictitious descent from Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet, assumed the sacred name and character of Madhi,—the inspired and holy personage whose coming had been announced by Mohammed. The cruelties perpetrated by the Fatimites upon their enemies are incredible. No torture was too severe, no persecution too sanguinary, for those who dared to resist their demands. The world stood aghast at the horrors of the African conquest. The prestige derived from a pretended origin gave the fanatics encouragement to assert the Schiite pretensions to infallibility, and, by the right of inheritance, to claim the dominion of the world. They were thoroughly familiar with the politics, intrigues, and military resources of the Peninsula. Their spies were to be found in every walk of life. Merchants, travellers, soldiers, dervishes—many of them men of great intelligence and observation—were in their pay, and regularly transmitted reports of the condition of trade, the location of treasure, the prospect of order, or the progress of revolution to their employers at Kairoan. The famous geographer, Ibn-Haukal, was one of these Fatimite emissaries, and his work contains many of the results of his experience which are not complimentary to the general condition of Mohammedan Spain, the capacity of its rulers, or the humanity of his own intolerant sect. There is reason to believe that a considerable party favorable to the reformers, and consisting largely of the better classes, existed in that country; and it is certain that the Berbers, whose sympathies were readily enlisted in favor of everything African, would have deserted by thousands to serve under their banners. This alarming state of affairs had been promoted by an obscure prediction sedulously propagated by the agents of the Fatimites, which announced that an African sovereign was one day to rule over the Peninsula, and all who believed it confidently asserted that the time of its realization was at hand.

Fully cognizant of the dangers attending the victorious progress of the Ismailians, who were now engaged in the conquest of Mauritania, Abd-al-Rahman heard with joy the appeal for assistance of the exiled princes of Necour, whose family for more than a century had been connected with his own by the closest ties of affection and gratitude. The distinguished refugees who had with difficulty escaped the vengeance of the tyrant of Kairoan were furnished with ships and munitions of war, and, by the policy of their benefactor, soon regained possession of their lost inheritance. Aware of the impossibility of permanently holding an isolated province against the overwhelming forces of the enemy, the Prince of Necour at once proclaimed the authority of the Ommeyades throughout his dominions; and the prudent generosity of Abd-al-Rahman was rewarded by the addition of a new state—which embraced the larger part of Mauritania—to the already extensive territory of his empire. Thus, by the interposition of a tributary province between the frontiers of Eastern Africa and Spain, the destructive advance of the Fatimites was stayed, and the permanence of the Ommeyade dynasty assured for two centuries longer.

The dangerous ambition of the African fanatics having been checked, Abd-al-Rahman was at liberty to turn his attention to the only foe who now dared to make war upon him,—the Christians of the North. A great victory was won by the minister Bedr at Mutonia; and the Leonese, thoroughly humiliated and convinced of the mutability of fortune, retired sullenly within the walls of their castles. Impatient of the monotonous life of his capital and ambitious of military distinction, Abd-al-Rahman now resumed command in person, and, entering the enemy's country, left in his wake the dreary evidence of rapine and desolation. Osma, Clunia, and San Estevan—over whose gate the head of the unfortunate general, Ibn-Abi-Abda, had been nailed—were stormed and destroyed. Navarre was invaded; its king, Sancho, beaten in a pitched battle and driven into the forests of the Pyrenees. The latter then effected a junction with Ordoño, and the two monarchs offered battle in the Valley of Junquera. Accustomed to ambuscade and to the protection of their native rocks and defiles, the mountaineers proved no match for the Moorish horsemen in the field. A more signal catastrophe than that of Junquera had never afflicted the Christian cause. The slaughter was appalling. The country for leagues was strewn with the bodies of the slain. A great number of prisoners fell into the hands of the Moslems, not the least important of whom were the militant bishops, Dulcidius of Salamanca, and

Hermogius of Tuy, who, following a custom antedating the Battle of the Guadalete, were taken, sheathed in armor, and fighting bravely in the front of battle.

After this victory, no serious resistance was offered to the Moslem advance. The light Moorish cavalry swept like a hurricane along the frontier of Navarre. The comparative poverty of the inhabitants presented few attractions to the invaders, who were forced to content themselves with flocks and the produce of the fields instead of the more tempting booty offered by the opulence and luxury of more civilized nations. The accumulation of provisions was so great in the Arab camp that they could not be removed, and a vast quantity of wheat was given to the flames to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy. This campaign was characterized by all the ruthless barbarity of the time. The women and children of the mountaineers were enslaved. The unsuccessful resistance of a garrison was followed by its extermination. The savage instincts of the Berbers were indulged by tortures and all the arts of the most exquisite cruelty. Whenever these barbarians encountered a monastery not one of the holy fathers was left alive. There was now visited upon the Christians a severe retaliation for the unspeakable horrors which they had been in the habit of inflicting upon their infidel adversaries in the name of the Gospel of Peace.

It is a striking peculiarity of the warfare so long waged between Moslem and Christian in Spain that disasters of the greatest apparent severity, no matter by whom endured, were productive of no substantial advantage to the conqueror. Many causes conspired to produce this anomalous result. The immense resources of the emirs were insufficient to protect their extended frontier. The numerous castles erected by the Kings of Leon and the Counts of Castile to retard the advance of the Arab squadrons failed to intimidate the bold riders of Andalusia. Thus the armies of either nation penetrated with trifling difficulty into the heart of the other's dominions. The extraordinary recuperative power of the Christians was manifested during the following year by an expedition of Ordoño, which carried the standard of Leon to a point but one day's journey from Cordova. Other evidences of the indomitable character of his enemies—who continued to capture his towns and carry off his subjects—having impressed Abd-al-Rahman with the necessity for future reprisals, he entered Navarre with an irresistible force. Pampeluna was taken, and its cathedral and many of its houses destroyed. The attacks of the King of Navarre, whose efforts were restricted to the feeble devices of guerilla warfare, were invariably repulsed. The death of Ordoño, and the quarrels resulting from a disputed succession which followed that event, paralyzed for a time the efforts of the Christians, and enabled Abd-al-Rahman to take an important and long meditated step for the increase of his greatness and the consolidation of his power.

It had hitherto been a legal maxim promulgated by the jurists, and unanimously recognized by the potentates, of the Moslem world that the title of Khalif, or Successor of the Prophet, was the peculiar attribute of that monarch whose dominions included the cities of Medina and Meccą. The control of the territory of the Hedjaz was thus considered to carry with it a degree of distinction and sanctity corresponding to that now conferred upon the successors of St. Peter by the choice of the conclave and the ceremonies of investiture which attend the accession of the spiritual sovereigns of Rome. The princes of the Abbaside dynasty had preserved their title, even after they had been deprived of the greater part of their empire; but now, descended to a state of tutelage to powerful vassals, and restricted in jurisdiction to the walls of their capital, they appeared to all true believers unworthy of an appellation which implied so much responsibility and had been the incentive to so much renown. Considerations of respect for ancestral greatness, the claims of religious prejudice and established custom, so revered by the Oriental, no longer existing in their former intensity, the Ommeyade Sultan did not hesitate to appropriate, in the character of the most opulent and distinguished of Moslem rulers, a title that had been virtually abandoned by a dynasty whose degenerate princes had demonstrated their incapacity to defend it, or even to appreciate the proud and holy distinction which its possession implied. Conscious of his merits, and believing that the past achievements of his reign had earned for him an honor which the imbecility and dependence of the monarchs of Bagdad had forfeited, Abd-al-Rahman issued an edict in which he assumed the titles of Amir-al-Mumenin, Commander of Believers, and Al-Nassir-al-Din-Allah, Defender of the Faith.

For three years the disorders which agitated the kingdom of Leon suspended hostilities between the Christians of the North and the khalifate. After many months of anarchy, defiled by horrible crimes,—crimes which recall the worst scenes that disgraced the revolutions of the Visigothic empire, assassinations, tortures, the blinding of some royal captives, the poisoning and starvation of others,—Ramiro II., a prince of great address and experience, ascended the throne. Through his intrigues with the governor of Saragossa, of the powerful family of the Beni-Haschim, he obtained the support, and at length received the allegiance, of the latter. Garcia, King of Navarre, was also induced to join the confederacy, which, thus including all the provinces of the North, both Christian and Moslem, offered an unbroken and formidable front to the power of the Khalif.

Once more the intrepid Abd-al-Rahman prepared for war. The issue of the campaign was everywhere favorable to his arms. Ramiro was worsted in a series of battles. Mohammed, the insurgent chief of the Beni-Haschim, was besieged in his capital, and either the fears or the clemency of his sovereign restored to him the trust he had so flagrantly betrayed. The monarch of Navarre and his mother, whose ambition had taken advantage of the youth and inexperience of her son, were compelled to sue for pardon at the feet of the Khalif, and to receive from his hands, as suzerain, the government of those states which had formerly been transmitted by Sancho the Great as an independent kingdom.

Elated beyond measure by his triumphs, Abd-al-Rahman conceived the idea of a grand expedition that might conquer the infidel states of the North and exterminate, or expel forever, those obstinate and dangerous enemies whose enterprise was a constant reproach to the zeal of the Mohammedans and a menace to the prosperity and safety of the khalifate. In accordance with this resolution the Djihad was proclaimed. A hundred thousand men rushed to arms. Volunteers came from Egypt, Syria, Mauritania, and the Libyan Desert to be present at the humiliation of the infidel, and to share in the plunder of his fields, his churches, his palaces. Great magazines of provisions and munitions of war were collected in suitable localities. Pack-trains composed of thousands of beasts of burden were assembled. No precaution was neglected to insure success. Surrounded by his splendid body-guard, the Khalif appeared in person at the head of this immense host, but, with a want of tact which did little credit to his knowledge of human nature, he bestowed the command upon Nadja, a

Slave, to the exclusion of the nobles, who saw with inexpressible indignation their hereditary pretensions to command subordinated to the favor enjoyed by an officer of inferior rank and of more than plebeian extraction. The Moslems came upon the allied army of Leon and Navarre at the village of Alhandega, not far from Salamanca. Undaunted by the superior numbers of the enemy the Christians bravely sustained the attack. The treachery of the Arab officers, invested with important commands, aided the intrepidity of the Leonese; the aristocratic chieftains, preferring the gratification of their resentment and defeat at the hands of the infidel to victory under a general of base and ignoble lineage, withdrew, and the Moslems underwent a terrible defeat. The commander-in-chief was killed. Whole divisions were destroyed; many distinguished soldiers were dragged away to the dungeons of Leon and Pampeluna; and the Khalif himself, with only forty-nine survivors of his numerous escort, succeeded with the greatest difficulty in escaping the swords of the Christian cavalry. The imminent peril he had incurred, the sudden disappearance of his magnificent army, and, perhaps, the consciousness of the impolicy of his conduct or fear that fortune had averted her face from him, so affected Abd-al-Rahman that he never again exposed his person in the field of battle.

But the results of a victory which promised to be so advantageous to the cause of Christendom was, as usual, nullified by the personal quarrels and revolutionary proceedings of the conquerors. The County of Castile, a dependency of the Asturian crown, grown powerful through the signal abilities and eminent services of its present ruler, Ferdinand Gonzalez, a personage famous in mediæval history and fable, aspired to the name and privileges of an independent kingdom. Its governor was a vassal whose fief was hereditary, but who held his office at the pleasure of the monarch, and, so far as the scanty annals of the age afford information, no province of the Peninsula was more inclined to turbulence and sedition. To distract the attention and divert the aims of this dangerous population, the Kings of Leon subdivided the province into four portions; but the counts who subsequently ruled it found no difficulty in reconciling their pretensions when resistance to the central authority was involved. A new plan was then devised by Ordoño II. The four counts were decoyed, upon a specious pretext, to a conference at Tejiare, on the borders of Castile and Leon, and put to death. The county now remained without a recognized leader until the rise of Ferdinand, whom the admiring gratitude of the Spaniards has exalted to the station of a demigod, and to whose prowess is to be justly attributed the foundation of the famous monarchy of Castile.

The claims of Ferdinand Gonzalez to the affection and confidence of his people had been established by many gallant deeds in war and by noble acts of private munificence in peace. In the numerous campaigns of Ramiro II. his voice had always been heard in the thickest of the fray. The spoil he collected from the enemies of Christ he bestowed in the erection of religious houses, in whose charters the name of the founder's suzerain was ostentatiously omitted. His influence was so great that the sovereign was forced to overlook these insults to his dignity, and to even seek to gain the support or secure the neutrality of his formidable vassal by the marriage of his own daughter to the son of Ferdinand. The attention of the count had been, of late, engrossed by the expeditions of the Moslems which ravaged his territory, but the rout of Alhandega gave him an advantage; and, formally revoking his allegiance, he declared war against the King of Leon. Ramiro, however, soon proved too strong for his rebellious vassal. Ferdinand was thrown into prison, his estates were confiscated, and the government of his dominions transferred to a stranger. But neither the promises nor the threats of the sovereign could shake the fidelity of the Castilians. In public acts and proclamations they defiantly effaced the name of Ramiro and inserted that of Ferdinand. Their devotion carried them to the verge of idolatry. They made a statue, arrayed in the habiliments of the illustrious exile, and, on bended knee, proffered to the senseless marble their unfaltering and reverent homage. Finally, their enthusiasm impelled them to march in a great body to the capital and demand the release of their lord, a request which the King of Leon saw proper to grant, but only under conditions that deprived the Count of Castile of much of his political influence and power.

The death of Ramiro was the signal for a bitter contest between his sons, Ordoño and Sancho, for the possession of the throne of Leon. The assistance of Ferdinand Gonzalez was invoked by the younger son Sancho, and the Count of Castile, perceiving the advantages that he would enjoy in the *rôle* of king-maker and which must eventually lead to his entire independence, seized without hesitation the golden opportunity. A bloody civil war ensued, in which Navarre also became involved, and hatred of the infidel was forgotten in the furious encounters of domestic strife. In the meantime, the armies of Abd-al-Rahman ravaged at will the Christian frontier. Raid followed raid with the assurance derived from constant impunity. The market-places of the Andalusian cities were heaped up with the significant trophies of victory,—crosses and crucifixes, embroidered vestments and jewelled censers, side by side with ghastly pyramids of heads, the number of the latter in one instance reaching five thousand. Distracted by the double peril of Castilian revolt and Moslem invasion, Ordoño III. sent ambassadors to Cordova to solicit peace. A treaty was drawn up by which the Leonese King agreed to surrender a number of the castles which protected the frontier; but before this condition could be fulfilled Ordoño died, and his brother Sancho, who succeeded him, peremptorily refused to execute the treaty. Hostilities were thereupon renewed; an Arab force invaded Leon; and a decisive victory gained by the general of the Khalif, Abu-Ibn-Yila, taught the imprudent Sancho the folly of resisting, without adequate resources and preparation, the growing power of the Moorish sovereign.

Sancho appears to have been a prince of ability and resolution, but his ideas of the royal prerogative were too decided for his age. Ambitious to enjoy the arbitrary rights which had been conferred by the ancient Visigothic system, he bent all his efforts to the suppression of the aristocracy, and, what was more dangerous still, neglected to conciliate the ecclesiastical order, whose wealth, and the veneration with which it was regarded, would have made it a dangerous antagonist for any monarch. The experiment, always a hazardous one, was doubly so in the case of Sancho, to whom fortune had denied those personal characteristics which elicit the applause or captivate the attention of mankind. An excessive and increasing obesity rendered him incapable of locomotion without assistance, and he had long since found it impossible to mount a horse. Among an active and athletic people whose trade was war, whose pastimes were found in the chase and the field, and with whom all martial exercises were at once a pleasure and a necessity, the spectacle of a helpless monarch, like Sancho the Fat, was one calculated to excite only sentiments of the deepest contempt. But when to this physical disadvantage were added an arrogant and despotic bearing and an ill-concealed intention to retrench the privileges of the nobility, whose members considered themselves, by reason of the theoretically elective character of the crown, almost equal in dignity, as many of them were superior in prowess, to the princes of the reigning house, the disdain of the subjects of Sancho was changed into apprehension lest the unwieldy monarch who excited their ridicule might ultimately develop into a merciless tyrant. A plot, to which Ferdinand Gonzalez, the professional agitator of the time, was a party, was formed; Sancho was compelled to take refuge in Navarre; and Ordoño IV., a hunchback, whose base and servile nature corresponded with the deformity of his person, was raised to the Leonese throne. Received with every demonstration of sympathy by his grandmother, the martial Tota,—the virtual ruler of Navarre who, for thirty years, had tried with various success the fortune of war with the emirs of Cordova,—Sancho experienced little difficulty in obtaining the promise of her aid in the recovery of his crown. But Navarre, a mountainous and thinly peopled region, was now exhausted by continued hostilities, and, indeed, had never been strong enough to cope unaided with the more extensive kingdom of Leon. An alliance with some foreign power was therefore an indispensable requisite for the successful prosecution of the design. In the formation of this alliance no choice was possible. One monarch alone, the Ommeyade Khalif, whose resources were sufficient to accomplish the desired end, could be approached, and that monarch was separated from the Navarrese queen by the remembrance of all the outrages of incessant warfare, of the enslavement and decapitation of thousands of her subjects, as well as by the barrier of a hostile faith, whose ill-comprehended and purposely distorted tenets were the abomination of every Christian. Other considerations rendered the present concession to the demands of a detested adversary even more galling. The warlike princess had commanded the Navarrese at the rout of Alhandega. She had seen the pride of the Ommeyades abased. She had trailed their banner in the dust. Multitudes of captives and incalculable spoil had attested the prowess of her subjects. The greatest of the Moslem sovereigns had fled before her arms. The emergency, however, admitted of no alternative, and demanded the sacrifice of pride and the oblivion of past injuries, which, in the eyes of Tota, were eclipsed by the present outrage upon her family. Another motive impelled her to have recourse to Abd-al-Rahman. The infirmity of Sancho was certainly not constitutional, and perhaps was not incurable. The reputation of the Jewish and Arab physicians for learning and skill was unequalled in the world, and the most eminent practitioners of that calling were residents of Cordova. It was evident from the experience of Sancho that the recovery of his health was an indispensable condition of his restoration to power. Sacrificing her prejudices to imperative necessity, and with a reluctance she could ill conceal, Tota despatched a formal embassy to the capital of the khalifate.

Abd-al-Rahman received the envoys of the Queen of Navarre with distinguished courtesy, and directed them to announce to their royal mistress that he would at once send an ambassador to her court, who would prescribe the conditions under which he would accede to her requests.

The Jew Hasdai was the agent designated by the Khalif to discharge the duties incident to this important mission. One of the most adroit and experienced negotiators of the time, the versatile genius of Hasdai had enabled him to attain to almost as exalted a rank in the profession of medicine as he had reached in the arts of diplomacy. He was further qualified for the post by his enjoyment of the confidence of his sovereign; by his thorough acquaintance with foreign tongues, including the idiom of the Christians; and by his vast erudition and elegant manners, which fascinated all with whom he came in contact. The occasion was one that required an emissary of more than ordinary ability. The instructions of Hasdai included a demand for the cession of ten fortresses in the territory of Leon, to be made as soon as the usurper had been expelled; and that Sancho himself, his uncle Garcia,—the nominal King of Navarre, in whose name Tota exercised the royal authority,—and the Queen should come in person to Cordova and sign the treaty. While no material objection was interposed to the first condition, in the discussion of the second it required all the address of Hasdai to overcome the repugnance of Tota to the humiliation that such a step implied. Finally, however, the eloquence and craft of the envoy prevailed, and, attended by a numerous company of ecclesiastics and nobles, the three Christian monarchs began their tedious journey. Their passage through the Moslem dominions was attended with every manifestation of public curiosity that such an extraordinary circumstance could excite. Immense crowds lined the highways. Cities and villages were emptied of their population, whose dense masses often seriously interfered with the progress of the escort. The arrival of the sovereigns at Cordova was signalized by a magnificent reception, more appropriate to victorious allies than to petitioners for the recovery of a throne. But the tact of the Khalif led him to disguise, as far as possible, the humiliating character he had compelled his guests to assume; and his dignity was at the same time enhanced by the exhibition of that opulence and grandeur which the occasion enabled him to display. The treaty was duly signed, and it was concerted between the parties that the power of the khalifate should be directed against Leon, while the forces of Navarre made simultaneously a diversion towards Castile, to prevent the co-operation of Count Ferdinand with the enemy.

No event of his long and brilliant reign did more to increase the prestige and strengthen the authority of the famous Moslem ruler than this stroke of profound policy. The enthusiasm of the people was unbounded. The feuds of centuries were, for the moment, forgotten in the indulgence of the feelings of national pride and exultation. The Jewish and Moslem poets contended with each other in celebrating a triumph without parallel in the annals of Islam, and lauded the fortune and the glory of a prince whose achievements had humbled the pride of the common enemy of their respective sects.

Meanwhile, the medical skill of the accomplished Hasdai had perceptibly reduced the enormous bulk which had virtually cost the unfortunate Sancho his crown, and, by the time the Moslem army was ready to march, he had fully recovered his former lightness and activity. The campaign was of short duration. City after city was taken; the entire kingdom renounced the usurper, and Ordoño was driven into the Asturias. The expedition of the Navarrese was attended with equal success. Ferdinand's army was beaten, and he himself taken prisoner. The mountaineers now refused to shelter any longer a dethroned monarch whose personal character rendered him unworthy of their sympathy, and Ordoño was compelled to flee into Castile.

This decisive campaign was the last of the warlike enterprises of the great Abd-al-Rahman. An imprudent exposure brought on an attack of pulmonary disease, which defied the skill of the ablest physicians, and, after an illness of several months, the most renowned sovereign who had occupied the Ommeyade throne of the West expired at the age of seventy years.

His reign lacked but a few weeks of reaching the extraordinary length of half a century. His deeds, however well authenticated, seem almost to pass the bounds of human credulity. When he received the sceptre, the regal authority was scarcely recognized within the narrow circuit of the walls of the capital. When that sceptre fell from his palsied grasp, the haughty descendants of the Visigoths, the champions of the Christian faith, the hitherto invincible mountaineers whose pride and bigotry exceeded even their valor, were his devoted vassals and tributaries. The most formidable rebellion that had ever afflicted the Peninsula—a rebellion of thirty years' standing—was crushed. The physical traces of that long and disastrous struggle were removed; the hatred which sprang from it, more implacable than even the aversion of sect to sect, was allayed. A foreign invasion which threatened not only the destruction of his race, but the extirpation of all knowledge and all civilization, was checked, and a long respite given to the cause of science and the avocations of peace. His predecessor bequeathed to him an uncertain revenue drawn from a precarious tribute; his own genius, besides providing for the enormous expenses of government, for the construction of great public improvements, and for the demands of a luxury without precedent in its extravagance, was still enabled to leave in the public treasury a sum equal to a hundred million dollars.

A powerful navy assured the safety of the coast from foreign attack, and permitted the development of a commerce whose agents had already established themselves in every province of Europe, Africa, and

Asia. As a result of this extensive trade, the bazaars of the Andalusian cities abounded with objects of luxury, whose existence had hitherto been unsuspected by the isolated population of the Peninsula. The effects of this intimate and constant intercourse with many nations were, moreover, disclosed by a marked refinement of manners, by an increased degree of mental activity, by a high appreciation of the benefits conferred by the possession of learning, and by the emancipation of the human mind from those theological prejudices which, in every age, have been at once the cause and the evidence of a condition of abject intellectual servitude.

The fame of Abd-al-Rahman had penetrated the most remote and barbarous regions of the globe. Princes of every rank in friendly rivalry endeavored, by every resource of munificence and adulation, to secure his friendship and promote his interests. Splendid embassies, bearing rare and priceless gifts, were frequently seen in the streets of the capital. The most remarkable of these was one despatched by Constantine Porphryogenitus, the Byzantine emperor, whose pride made him ambitious to surpass, in the superb appointments and pompous ceremonial of his representatives, the reputed magnificence of his distant ally. But exhibiting, as it did, all the evidences of the opulence and grandeur of the master of the Eastern Empire, the embassy of Constantine was eclipsed by the gorgeous blaze of the Ommeyade Court. Its reception recalled the extravagant tales of Oriental romance. The approaches to the palace were lined with the guards of the Khalif, whose gay uniforms, burnished armor, and jewel-hilted scimetars glittered in the dazzling rays of an Andalusian sun. Beautiful awnings of silk were suspended over court-yard and archway. The halls of the Alcazar were hung with cloth of gold and silver, and with tapestry whose folds exhibited intricate patterns of the most exquisite arabesques. Through gardens of aromatic plants, through colonnades of many-colored marble, over floors of polished mosaic, the envoys were conducted to the audience chamber. Here were seated the Khalif and the members of his family, while ranged around them stood the great civil and military dignitaries of the empire, the chiefs of the eunuchs, the officials of the royal household. After a profound obeisance, the ambassadors presented the letter of their sovereign. It was of sky-blue parchment, inscribed with letters of gold. The seal was also of the same precious metal; it bore on one side the effigy of the Saviour, and on the other the medallions of Constantine and his son. The letter was enclosed in a golden box carved with wondrous skill, and it, in turn, was placed in a case enveloped in tissue of silk and gold. On the lid of this case was a mosaic portrait of the Greek emperor.

In order to impress the ambassadors with the talents and literary acquirements of his courtiers, as well as to do them honor, the Khalif had appointed a famous orator and poet to pronounce an address of welcome, which should, at the same time, exalt the glories of his reign and the grandeur of his empire. But the august presence in which he found himself, and the consciousness of his inability to do justice to his subject, so affected the impressible nature of the chosen exponent of the eloquence of Cordova that he was unable to utter a single word. Then the Khalif called upon one after another of the wise men at his side, whose skill in improvisation had heretofore never failed them, to greet the Grecian embassy, but they also were silent. At last, unsolicited, a Persian, named Mondhir-Ibn-Said, a recent arrival at the court, arose, and repeated some appropriate and extemporaneous verses, full of the glowing images and extravagant metaphors which are the delight of the passionate Oriental. When he concluded, neither the presence of royalty, nor the stately and dignified etiquette of the court, could repress the applause of the delighted audience, and the Khalif recompensed the fortunate poet with a purse of gold, and at once appointed him—for he was learned in the law—Chief Kadi of Cordova. The envoys, having received every attention in the power of their generous host, were dismissed, accompanied by a vizier charged to offer, in the name of the Khalif, a number of splendid horses, arms, and coats of mail to the Byzantine emperor.

The account of another embassy of an entirely different character which arrived some time afterwards is instructive, as affording a curious picture of the manners of the time. The Khalif having formed, from the accounts of mendacious travellers, an exaggerated idea of the extent and resources of Germany, and desirous of opening diplomatic relations with that power, sent to Otho, the son of Henry the Fowler, a letter, accompanied with the usual presents. The chief of the embassy, a Mozarabic bishop, perished on the journey, and the missive was delivered by his companions, who were ignorant of its contents. The pride of Abd-al-Rahman had permitted him to incorporate into his letter expressions which were not complimentary to the Trinitarian belief, or, as the chronicle suggestively remarks, " in it the German emperor was much better treated than the God of the Christians," trusting to the tact of the bishop to soothe any irritation that might arise from its perusal. Otho, having read it, in the absence of all explanation, naturally construed the language of the Moslem as a deliberate insult to his religion, treated the envoys with marked indignity, removed them from the precincts of the court, and for three years wholly ignored their presence, except to restrain them of their liberty.

Then he determined to retaliate in kind. A letter was drawn up by the Archbishop of Cologne, in which the vocabularies of profane and ecclesiastical abuse were exhausted in search of epithets to be heaped upon Mohammed. A messenger was now sought to convey this scurrilous epistle, for, while many could be found who were willing to write it, few were inclined to run the risk attending its delivery; for it was well known that among the Moslems vituperation of the Prophet was inexorably punished with death. Finally, John de Gorza, a fanatic monk, whose austere life had obtained for him a reputation for unusual piety, voluntarily offered himself as a candidate for the perilous duty which almost necessarily involved the penalty of martyrdom. His services were accepted in default of those of an ambassador of superior dignity, and three ecclesiastics of equal rank were selected to accompany him, and to share the doubtful fortunes of the enterprise. All arrangements having been completed, this singular embassy set forth from the court of Otho with but slight probability of its return. Arrived without accident at Cordova, the monks were detained in one of the suburbs pending the negotiation which Abd-al-Rahman deemed it proper to enter into with them touching the offensive letter of the emperor, whose contents were no secret at the Mussulman court. The Khalif found himself placed in an unpleasant dilemma. The law was severely explicit concerning the treatment of such as blasphemed the name of Mohammed. Should the envoys deliver the letter of Otho, responsibility would attach to their act as the representatives of their sovereign, and yet their execution would be, in the eyes of the world, a serious violation of the law of nations. Every effort was made to induce John de Gorza to retain the letter and present only the gifts which accompanied it. The services of the shrewdest diplomatists of the court were enlisted for this purpose. But the stubborn fanatic, in whom the splendors of the Moslem empire aroused only a feeling of disdain, was not to be convinced by the insinuating arts nor intimidated by the menaces of the emissaries of the Khalif. The difficulty was at length adjusted by John de Gorza consenting to apply to his royal master for another letter to be substituted for the objectionable one in his possession. This was done, and, after a delay of eighteen months, preparations were made for the reception of the embassy. Now, however, a fresh obstacle was interposed by the obstinacy of monkish prejudice. The rigorous etiquette, as well as the elegance and decorum of the Moslem court, were insulted by the coarse and tattered garments and uncleanly appearance of the German envoy. Attributing his condition to poverty, the Khalif sent him a large sum of money to be expended in procuring suitable clothing. True to his profession, the unselfish anchorite at once bestowed the whole amount in alms upon the poor. The Khalif, unable to repress his admiration for the consistent and uncompromising character of the bold ecclesiastic, exclaimed, "By Allah! were he only clothed with a bag, I will see him."

Introduced with every form of ceremonious courtesy into the presence of the most brilliant court in Europe, John de Gorza, unawed by the majesty of the monarch and apparently unimpressed by the new and dazzling scenes that met his eye, bore himself with a calm dignity and self-possession little to be expected from his previous conduct; and Abd-al-Rahman, greatly pleased with his candor and humility, accorded him before his departure the unusual distinction of a private audience, and finally dismissed him with every token of honor and esteem.

This period is remarkable for the success of a handful of adventurers, who, in the closing years of the preceding century, had established themselves on the coast of France, and whose enterprise, had they received substantial aid from the government of Cordova, might have affected, in no small degree, the ultimate fate of Christian Europe.

In the year 889, a band of twenty Moorish pirates were driven by a tempest into the Gulf of Grimaud, which washes the shores of Lower Provence. Their predatory habits tempted them to explore the adjacent country; a village was surprised and plundered; and further investigation convinced them of the advantages which chance had thrown in their way for the foundation of a permanent colony. It was indeed an ideal spot for a robber stronghold. The commerce of the Northern Mediterranean was within easy reach. The harbor was retired and capacious. Lofty mountains covered with dense forests surrounded it. From their summits could be discerned the highly-cultivated plains of France, for generations free from the inroads of the marauder, whose inhabitants, ruled by a succession of incapable princes, were wholly destitute of the martial spirit which supplies the neglect of royal protection in a hardy peasantry, and who had been long unaccustomed to the use of arms. Near at hand were the Alps, through whose unguarded passes access was obtainable to the smiling valleys and rich cities of Italy, a country which has been the goal of every military adventurer of Western Europe in both ancient and modern times.

The Moslem freebooters lost no time in apprising their friends and comrades of their discovery. Recruits from Spain, Sicily, and Africa daily swelled their ranks. It was not long before a score of castles —each the seat of a marauding chieftain—crowned the heights overlooking the Gulf of Grimaud and the Forest of Fraxinet. With profound sagacity, these enterprising bandits sold their support to the feudal barons, whose quarrels perpetually vexed the petty states of Provence, always choosing the weakest for their allies. Thus they held the balance of power, and, enriched by the plunder of civil war, acquired each year a larger measure of influence and importance. Their relentless cruelty gave them a weight out of all proportion to their numbers or their valor. Their excesses were the terror of the peasantry. By the end of the ninth century, they had crossed the Alps, threatened Turin, destroyed many monasteries, and laid waste the plains of Montferrat and Piedmont. They established themselves on the Po. In 935 they had advanced to the borders of Liguria. Their depredations extended as far as the city of Genoa. The passes of Mount Cenis and Mount St. Bernard were in their hands. From their strongholds in the Alps they stopped all traffic and levied contributions on every traveller. They carried their arms into Switzerland, and penetrated to the shores of Lake Constance. They burned churches and abbeys under the walls of Marseilles. The city of Nice still bears, in the name of one of its quarters, a souvenir of Saracen occupation.

In France, by reason of its proximity to their colony and the greater facilities it offered to their movements, their incursions were more frequent and disastrous. Much of the level country was depopulated. In the strongest cities alone was security to be found. Almost the entire territory of Provence, Languedoc, and Dauphiné was at one time subject to the visitations of this awful scourge. So strongly had these daring banditti intrenched themselves in the mountains of Southwestern Europe, that the princes in whose dominions they were found were unable to dislodge them. It is hinted by Liutprand that the embassy of John de Gorza had for its principal object the cessation of their ravages, through the intervention of the Khalif, a statement by no means improbable.

Be this as it may, it was not long after that event that the power of the Moslem colonists began to decline. For a time the influx of recruits, the appropriation of women, and the institution of polygamous households threatened a superiority in numbers as well as in arms, and a permanency of occupation, conditions whose danger had been exemplified by the Arab conquests in the South. These fears, however, proved without foundation. The Christians gradually recovered their ground. Castle after castle fell before their assaults. Dependent upon their own efforts, the Moslem pirates could not sustain the combined attack made upon them from every side, and, before the death of Abd-al-Rahman, they had lost their influence as a disturbing force in those countries which they had for three-quarters of a century made the scene of their depredations.

The operations of these chieftains were never divested of the character of brigandage. Except in time of common danger, they acted independently of each other. The permanent success which is derived from a union of forces and concerted political action never attended their arms. Yet, without organization and deprived of the support of any foreign government, they maintained their footing in a hostile territory for nearly a hundred years. Their only resources were the plunder they obtained from their neighbors. Their only recruits were adventurers like themselves, attracted by the hope of booty. Their harems were filled by their forays, and their race propagated at the expense of the enemy. No chronicle, Christian or Arab, explicitly states that they were even countenanced, still less assisted, by the Khalifate of Cordova. Yet no opportunity so favorable to the extension of the Faith and the conquest of Europe was ever offered to the Spanish Moslems. The strategic importance of these piratical strongholds was far greater than that of the exposed settlements of Septimania. They were easily accessible by sea. With trifling labor they might have been rendered impregnable. They controlled the passes of the Alps. They menaced the great cities of Marseilles, Arles, and Narbonne. As a point of concentration for an invading army their value was indisputable. Difficult of approach, they commanded the rich plains of Provence and Languedoc, of Piedmont and Lombardy. The facility with which their marauding and undisciplined garrisons overran the adjacent provinces as far as Genoa and Grenoble is suggestive of the results which might have been accomplished by the systematic operations of a great military power like that of Abd-al-Rahman III., supported by the resources of the most opulent and warlike nation of the age.

The domestic policy of Abd-al-Rahman gave indications of the same genius that directed his military campaigns and diplomatic negotiations. The exact administration of justice, the vigilance of a numerous and well-appointed police, the supervision of an incorruptible magistracy, guaranteed to every class of society the full enjoyment of the rights of person and property. The prevalence of order and the suppression of crime were no less evident in regions far remote from the seat of government than in the immediate precincts of the capital.

The love of pomp and the prodigal display of luxury kept even pace with the increasing wealth and multiplied resources of the empire. The temples were enriched with the spoils and decorated with the trophies of the churches and monasteries of the infidel. The Great Mosque of the capital was enlarged, its court enclosed with a graceful arcade and cooled by delicious fountains. The palaces and gardens of Cordova surpassed in extent and equalled in magnificence the famous ones of Bagdad and Damascus. In the charming and luxurious retreat of Medina-al-Zahrâ, the Khalif transacted the daily routine of business; received foreign ambassadors; heard and decided contests for literary precedence; determined questions of civil and ecclesiastical law. Entertaining, not without reason, a profound distrust of the Arab element, which composed the most intelligent portion of his subjects, he committed the principal offices of government and entrusted the care of his person to the Mamlouks, or Slaves, a class of servile origin, whose numbers—through royal favor, the possession of marked capacity for affairs, and the habit of implicit obedience—soon rose to extraordinary power and influence in the state. This term was applied at first to captives taken in war by the Arabs themselves, or sold to them by the barbarian nations of Germany. But by degrees the name acquired a more extensive significance, and came to include all persons of foreign birth or base extraction employed in the civil and military service of the khalifate. Almost every nation and tribe from the shores of the Caspian to the western extremities of Lusitania were represented in this important class, the alien birth and dependent character of whose constituents divested them of sympathy with the other subjects of the empire, and assured their unwavering devotion to the interests of their master. From the earliest days of the emirate, an enormous traffic had been carried on in slaves with Christian countries, principally with France and Italy. Its profits, originally monopolized by Jews, were, in time, shared by Christian ecclesiastics; and it has been established by incontrovertible evidence that at least one pope did not disdain to replenish the coffers of the Church by an expedient so prejudicial to the interests of religion and humanity. The monasteries of the South of France were largely devoted to the manufacture of eunuchs; those on the Meuse were also especially celebrated on this account, the unfortunate subjects for mutilation being procured by the monks through the purchase of children from the peasantry. The Slave caste, while it included a considerable proportion of eunuchs, was by no means, however, limited to individuals of that unfortunate class.

Although condemned by adverse fortune to a subordinate and frequently to a humiliating position in the scale of society, the inferiority of the Slave, in this respect, was more than compensated by the authority he exercised, by the wealth he was enabled to accumulate, and by the consideration he enjoyed as the chosen agent of the Khalif in posts of responsibility and confidence. The highest employments were entrusted to these strangers, to the prejudice of the ancient aristocracy whose lineage could be traced to the Pagan guardians of the Kaaba and the Companions of the Prophet. The royal body-guard was entirely composed of Slaves. Introduced into the country at an age when youth is most susceptible to outward impressions, they imbibed, through intimate association, through the influence of example, through religious instruction, and through considerations of personal interest, the habits, the prejudices, and the faith of the Moslems. Some amassed large fortunes in trade. Others rose to important commands in the army. Many maintained establishments which surpassed those of the nobility in pomp and extravagance, and themselves owned multitudes of slaves. Not a few were noted for their scholarly attainments; possessed extensive libraries; participated with credit in the public debates which amused the leisure of the court; and acquired no inconsiderable reputation in the pursuits of literature.

This epoch of Moorish dominion, agitated by foreign war and intestine disturbance, was likewise oppressed by the calamities of nature and the grievous machinations of domestic treason. In the year 915, the Peninsula was visited by a famine of unparalleled severity. A long-continued drought, which defied the skill of the hydraulic engineers and the resources of an irrigating system that was the admiration of Europe, wasted the land. A pestilence followed, as usual, in the wake of the famine. Deprived of all means of subsistence and consumed by disease, the unhappy peasantry perished by thousands. The streets and highways were obstructed with the dying and the dead. The mosques were crowded day and night with suppliants, who implored the pity of a God who seemed to have turned His face in anger from His children. Such was the mortality that the survivors were unable to afford to the deceased the rites of burial. Every effort was exerted by the government to alleviate the public misery, but the distress was so general that the liberality of the Khalif was unable to produce any great improvement in the lamentable condition of his subjects, whose violent measures to obtain the necessaries of life not infrequently required the intervention of military force. The measure of national misfortune was filled by the ruin wrought by a terrible hurricane that swept the coasts of Africa and Andalusia, and by a conflagration that destroyed the larger portion of the capital.

Abd-al-Rahman had two sons, named respectively Al-Hakem and Abdallah. Of these, the first was the heir apparent, who, though greatly esteemed and respected for his noble character and princely virtues, was still generally considered as inferior to his brother in literary ability as well as in those showy qualities and accomplishments which dazzle the eyes of the populace. In an evil hour, the ambitious Abdallah, incited by his friend the theologian Ibn-Abd-al-Barr, was induced to agree to the assassination of Al-Hakem, and a plot was hatched with that end in view. Unhappily for their success, a spy had introduced himself into the councils of the conspirators, and they were secretly arrested. Some were impaled. Ibn-Abd-al-Barr anticipated the executioner by suicide; and Abdallah, in spite of the magnanimous intercession of the injured Al-Hakem, was strangled in prison. The happiness of the Khalif was deeply and permanently affected by a deed in which paternal affection was sacrificed to a sense of public duty; and to the day of his death the memory of the untimely fate of his son constantly haunted his thoughts and imparted to his character a melancholy which no diversion could charm away, and no triumph, however glorious, could entirely efface.

The greatness of the Moslem power in Spain under Abd-al-Rahman III. is to be attributed to the extraordinary administrative capacity of that renowned monarch. The glory in fact is exclusively his own. The attention he paid to the minute details of government was not less marked than the skill with which he directed to a successful issue enterprises of the greatest magnitude and importance. He was the impersonation of imperial despotism. No sovereign of his race had hitherto centred in his person, to the exclusion of all other sources of authority, the prestige, the honor, the dignity of empire. He possessed in a remarkable degree those talents which facilitate the subordination and amalgamation of hostile elements of society long accustomed to anarchy, a task far more difficult than the conquest of great nations. The discernment he exhibited in abolishing all taxes not authorized by the traditional law of Islam acquired for him the public confidence at the very beginning of his reign. The history of that period exhibits a picture of religious toleration in vivid contrast to the revolting crimes perpetrated by the Sees of Constantinople and Rome. So little was this great prince influenced by sectarian prejudice, or even by ordinary considerations of policy, that he was with infinite difficulty dissuaded from appointing to the highest judicial office of the realm a renegade, whose father and mother still belonged to the Christian communion. The assumption of the title of khalif, attended by the alteration in the coinage and the modification of the public prayers in the mosques—acts that confirmed to him the attributes of his new and well-merited dignity—gave him great prominence in the Mohammedan world. The achievements of a quarter of a century certainly entitled him to a distinction which his pride and wisdom now induced him to appropriate, and which was destined to contribute a new and powerful impulse to the civilization of Western Europe. His popularity called forth such multitudes of volunteers when the Holy War was proclaimed that care had to be taken lest the shops be left without clerks and the fields without laborers.

The reign of Abd-al-Rahman III. is coincident with the greatest wealth, grandeur, and prosperity of the Hispano-Arab domination, as those of his son and grandson indicate respectively the climax of its intellectual supremacy and its military glory. During this, the most flourishing era of the Saracen empire, the Peninsula presented the aspect of a highly cultivated and extraordinarily productive garden. The graceful and delicious plants of the Orient grew everywhere side by side with the indigenous flora of less favored Europe. The semi-tropical region embraced by the provinces of Valencia and Murcia, thickly settled as they are, then supported a far more numerous population than now clusters in their fertile valleys. The treeless and proverbially barren steppes of Old Castile were diversified with forests and dotted with picturesque villages. Endless fields of ripening grain met the eye on the plains of La Mancha, where to-day a sparse and straggling vegetation affords precarious sustenance to the flock of the shepherd. The nature of the soil, its peculiar adaptability to certain agricultural products, the rotation of crops, the fertilizing qualities of all varieties of manures, the systematic distribution and economy of water, were thoroughly understood, and the principles of scientific husbandry applied with phenomenal success. Not a foot of ground was wasted. The rocky hill-sides were, with infinite labor, cut into terraces, covered with mould, and planted with vineyards. Where even a single citron, carob, or olive-tree would grow, a triangular enclosure was constructed of stones filled with earth and tended with assiduous care. The yield of the harvests was often a hundred-fold. It was not unusual, in many districts, for the same ground to produce four crops of different kinds in the course of a year. In the South, where the warm and genial climate assisted the natural productiveness of the soil, the country was not inaptly termed a terrestrial paradise. The suburbs of Cordova, Granada, and Murcia were proverbial for their beauty, and their luxuriant vegetation was rather suggestive of the rural surroundings of provincial hamlets than of the vicinity of great capitals. The olive orchards of Seville were the most extensive in the world. The banks of the Guadalquivir, near that city, were lined with fruit-trees, and, for a distance of thirty miles, one could travel through a succession of farm-houses, castles, and stately villas embowered in perennial verdure. A net-work of canals, subject to and regulated by an equitable code of laws interpreted by rustic magistrates chosen by the people, traversed in all directions the tillable land of every province. Gigantic aqueducts spanned valleys and hill-sides, bearing to the parched and thirsty soil of the distant plains the refreshing waters of the mountain springs. The experience of the Moor enabled him to detect the presence of the precious fluid in the most unpromising localities; and subterranean channels, hundreds of yards in length, hewn in the living rock, still attest his dauntless energy and perseverance.

The incessant wars and domestic feuds of the Abbasides and the Fatimites, which consumed their resources and interrupted their commerce, presented opportunities to the Ommeyades of Spain by which they were ever ready to profit. The isolated situation of the latter, and the peaceful condition of their empire for extended periods of time, were eminently propitious to the development of foreign trade, while the possession of a large merchant marine facilitated transportation to points that national hostility and religious prejudice often rendered inaccessible by land. Although the great entrepôt of Alexandria was closed to the subjects of the Khalifs of the West, they were amply indemnified by the hospitable reception and official courtesies which they habitually received from the people of Constantinople. It was a judicious and enlightened policy, and one whose important influence on every branch of art and learning cannot be estimated by the material prosperity, however great, which its institution conferred, that dictated the alliance, and preserved the close relations long existing between the princes of Moorish Spain and the sovereigns of Byzantium. During its most prosperous era, the merchant vessels of the khalifate numbered more than a thousand. Permanent agencies for the purchase and sale of merchandise were established in the most distant regions of the East,—in Ceylon, in Sogdiana, in China. There were few bodies of water accessible to maritime traffic where the flag of the Ommeyades was not known.

The vaunted glories of the Abbaside dynasty were surpassed, in many respects, by the civilization of the Hispano-Arab empire. In the extent of its public works, in the magnificence of its palaces, in the embellishment of its temples, the superiority of the latter can hardly be questioned. Its thorough and systematic cultivation of the soil was not inferior in its results to the methods pursued in the most productive fields of Mesopotamia, the Garden of Asia. No comparison exists between the trade of Damascus and Bagdad, largely dependent on caravans, and that of Moorish Spain, which, in addition to this resource, employed great fleets of merchantmen.

The best indications of the prosperity of the Western Khalifate are to be derived from its population and its public revenues. It has been estimated by competent authorities that the subjects of Abd-al-Rahman III. numbered at least thirty million. Great as was the extent of the metropolis, incredible as was her wealth, superb as were her environs, many of the other cities of the empire, while they could not rival her power and grandeur, shared the enormously profitable benefits of a civilization in which Cordova enjoyed a well-deserved pre-eminence. The dominions of the Khalif included eighty municipalities of the first rank and three hundred of the second; the smaller towns were almost innumerable. Along the banks of the Guadalquivir alone stood twelve thousand villages. So thickly was the country settled that the traveller usually passed, in the space of a single day's journey, no less than three large cities in the midst of an unbroken succession of towns and hamlets. Nothing comparable with the opulence and splendor of the great provincial capitals was to be seen outside of the Peninsula. Seville contained five hundred thousand inhabitants; Almeria an equal number; Granada four hundred and twenty-five thousand; Malaga three hundred thousand; Valencia two hundred and fifty thousand; Toledo two hundred thousand.

The sanitary regulations maintained in these large communities were almost perfect. The streets were paved and lighted. A thorough system of drainage prevailed. Some of the sewers under the city of Valencia were large enough to admit a cart with ease, and the smallest could be traversed by a loaded beast of burden. Order was preserved by means of a numerous and well-organized police, who patrolled the thoroughfares day and night.

From the best information to be obtained concerning the revenues of Spain under the Arabs during the reigns of different monarchs, the conclusion is indisputable that they exceeded in amount those of all the other sovereigns of Europe combined. The data we possess, while much less copious and explicit than could be desired, are, as far as they go, undoubtedly correct, although some critics have questioned their accuracy. A single instance may suffice to convey an idea of the wealth of the khalifs under the most flourishing conditions of their empire. The revenue of Abd-al-Rahman III. was twelve million nine hundred and forty-five thousand dinars, equivalent to thirty-three million six hundred thousand dollars. The immensity of the pecuniary resources of the khalifate may well excite the wonder, if not the incredulity, of the scholar when it is remembered that the ratio of the respective monetary values of the tenth and twentieth centuries is ten to one. The fact that such a sum could be contributed for the support of government by a nation occupying a limited territorial area like that of Spain, without being considered onerous or in any way impairing its commercial prosperity, is a more reliable indication of the affluence of the Western Khalifate than a whole library of statistics. The principal tax levied was one-tenth of the yield of the mines, crops, mercantile investments, and industrial occupations. In addition to this was the regular contribution, yielding fourteen million dollars, paid by Christians and Jews as a consideration for the enjoyment of their laws and the practice of their religion; certain taxes on shops and on the sale of property, and duties on imports, none of which were at all excessive. One of the most important sources of revenue, in a warlike age, was the fifth of the booty obtained in battle, which, after division, was deposited in the royal treasury. No approximate computation can be made of its amount, which necessarily varied with each campaign, and no appraisement was taken of its actual value after its first distribution, which was, in most instances, hastily made and inaccurate. The exigencies of warfare, and the expenses arising from the construction of important public works, often demanded the imposition of additional and extraordinary burdens, which, while not countenanced by law, were usually paid without remonstrance, as required for the propagation of the Faith and for the completion of noble architectural monuments representing the glory and piety of the monarch and the opulence of the state. The dignitaries of the empire maintained the pomp and state of princes. Their palaces, their courts, their retinues, were inferior only to those of their royal master. No Christian potentate could vie with them in magnificence. Their wealth, accumulated by every legal expedient, by every device of extortion, was bestowed with lavish hand. A present made by the Vizier, Ibn-Shobeyd, to Abd-al-Rahman III., and celebrated by the Arab writers of the age as an instance of prodigal generosity, bears witness of the vast treasures which must have been possessed by imperial officials of the highest rank. It included an estate whose forests contained twenty thousand trees; sixty slaves, male and female, selected for their accomplishments and beauty; one hundred horses and mules; eight hundred suits of armor; a large number of costly weapons, tents, and trappings; carpets, cushions, and silks; rare sables and cloaks of brocade; quantities of camphor, aloes, musk, and amber. The most important item of this magnificent gift was coin and virgin gold to the amount of five hundred and fifty thousand dinars. Its whole value may be estimated at more than five million dollars.

The political sagacity of the Moorish princes neglected no precaution which might contribute to the consolidation of their authority or the security of their dominions. The navy of Abd-al-Rahman III. was the most powerful in the Mediterranean. The irregular troops at his command were practically unlimited in number; those regularly enrolled amounted to more than a hundred and fifty thousand. The body-guard of the Khalif was famous for the splendor of its arms and the perfection of its discipline. It was composed of twelve thousand veterans, of whom eight thousand were cavalry. The accoutrements of the members of this select corps were the most costly and perfect that the military science of the time could provide. Their uniform was of the finest silk. The caparisons of their horses were unequalled in magnificence. The hilts of their scimetars were jewelled; their belts and scabbards were of solid gold.

Facilities for rapid and secure communication with the frontiers of the empire were afforded by substantial causeways, which, radiating from the capital, were equally available for the passage of troops and the transportation of merchandise. The safety of the traveller was assured by patrols and sentinels lodged in barracks distributed at regular intervals. A system of posts transmitted intelligence by means of couriers and relays of horses with a rapidity that to the mind of the astonished foreigner seemed almost magical. Innumerable watch-towers, still known to the Spaniards by their Arab name, atalayas, rose upon every promontory of the long extended line of coast, and from their summits beacons flashed timely notice of the movements of friendly cruisers and hostile squadrons.

Vast sums were repeatedly appropriated from the treasury for structures designed for public utility, solely with the object of affording employment to the industrious artisan and laborer. Abd-al-Rahman II. caused proclamation to be made throughout his dominions that no man, able and willing to work, should suffer because of enforced idleness. Thus was established by implication the salutary principle that the accumulated wealth of the state was the property of the people, and to its general application is to be attributed the extraordinary number of castles, mosques, bridges, and aqueducts which cover every part of the Peninsula once subject to Mussulman rule.

The sick and the unfortunate were housed and cared for in public institutions erected for that purpose. Orphans were maintained and educated from the private purse of the Khalif, five hundred being enrolled in a single school at Cordova, a noble example of patriarchal solicitude and royal generosity.

Equally unlike their predecessors the Barbarians and their own conquerors the Castilians, the Spanish Arabs did not take pleasure in the destruction of the proud memorials of Roman greatness. It is true that where a structure was hopelessly ruined, they appropriated the materials for their own edifices. Wanton injury of the relics of classic antiquity was, however, always discountenanced by the liberal spirit of the Spanish Moslem. Even from the earliest epoch of their occupation, the grandeur of these works, which have immortalized the power and majesty of the Cæsars, filled their untutored but not unappreciative minds with awe and wonder. Bridges and fortifications which had survived since the reign of the first emperors were rebuilt. The highways, which formed such an important feature of the military policy of the empire, were thoroughly repaired and extended. Such objects of Greek or Roman art as came into possession of the Saracens—with the exception of statuary, which, as representing the human form, partook of the abomination of idolatrous worship—were carefully preserved. In every act and sentiment was disclosed a feeling of reverence and admiration for the imposing and graceful monuments bequeathed to posterity by the former masters of the world.

The centre of all this wonderful civilization was the famous city of Cordova. The capital of the empire, of itself, it possessed all the requisites of a mighty state, a vast population, commercial wealth, religious prestige, political power. Eight cities of the first rank and three thousand smaller towns were subject to its jurisdiction. Each year the sum of three million pieces of gold—sixty million dollars—was paid into its treasury. No community of ancient or mediæval times could compare with it in proficiency in the arts, in scientific attainments, in intellectual culture. Its inhabitants could not have numbered less than a million. Their dwellings, generally built of stone, exhibited the unpretending exterior peculiar to Oriental architecture, but within they were adorned with mosaics and arabesques, with blooming parterres and marble fountains. The streets, adapted to the scorching climate, were narrow, but solidly paved, perfectly drained, and, subject to constant supervision, were kept in a state of cleanliness unknown to the best-regulated municipalities of modern Europe. In summer, a grateful coolness was obtained by awnings, which, stretched from one building to another, excluded the rays of the sun, facilitating the purposes of traffic and the intercourse of the people. The houses —exclusive of the palaces of the nobles and public officials, which were very numerous—amounted to the extraordinary figure of one hundred and thirteen thousand. There were eighty thousand four hundred shops, seven hundred mosques, nine hundred baths, and four thousand three hundred markets, where were constantly to be seen the costumes and the treasures of every country known to commerce in that age.

For ten miles in a direct line on the darkest night the pedestrian could walk securely through the city and its environs by the light of innumerable lamps. The total area of the capital included a space of twenty-four miles in length by six in width along the classic Bætis, which—the only stream of Andalusia that is said to bear a strictly Arab name—had been designated by the Saracens The Great River. The circumference of the city proper, enclosed by fortified walls, was fourteen miles. In the size and number of its bazaars and in the variety of the merchandise with which its warehouses were filled, Cordova enjoyed an undisputed pre-eminence over the most luxurious cities of Asia, and west of the Bosphorus had no rival, with the single exception of Constantinople.

The rarest and most expensive luxuries of the table and the harem were to be procured in the shops of the gigantic capital. Beautiful slaves from Greece, Italy, and Abyssinia; white eunuchs, whose emasculation had rather enhanced than diminished their elegance of form and regularity of feature; blacks, whose repulsive hideousness and colossal stature were qualifications for the retinue of the Khalif; books and manuscripts in every tongue; the choicest spices and perfumes of the Orient; priceless jewels, whose sheen enhances to such a degree the charms of female loveliness; robes of every hue and texture, woven with texts and mottoes in threads of silver and gold,—all of these, and many other wares, objects of the cupidity and the passions of man—were daily exhibited to the covetous and admiring glance of the passer-by. Great caravansaries afforded shelter to multitudes of merchants, travellers, and pilgrims, who, allured by avarice, curiosity, or devotion, daily resorted to the renowned Metropolis of the West. Inns, where food, lodging, and alms were gratuitously distributed to the worthy but impecunious scholar, whose means were inadequate to the gratification of his literary aspirations, established by the government and maintained from the funds of the public treasury, formed a peculiar and striking feature of the varied life of the city. From the rivulets of the distant Sierra, a lofty aqueduct, two leagues and a half in length—and whose vermilion hue, derived from the cinnabar in its cement, presenting a vivid contrast to the green of the surrounding landscape, rendered it a most conspicuous object—furnished the inhabitants with a never-failing supply of water. Fountains threw up their glittering spray in every square, before every palace, in the court-yard of every mosque. In some instances, the stream poured in noisy volume from the mouth of a lion or a crocodile of gilded bronze, grotesque and terrible in appearance; in others, the drops rippled gently over the edges of exquisitely carved basins of porphyry and alabaster. The air was heavy with the mingled aroma of myriads of blossoms, as from orchard and garden were wafted the odors of many a delicious exotic, which filled the streets with their intoxicating fragrance.

Seven ponderous gates, covered with scales of brass, gave access to the five different quarters, or wards, into which the city was divided, each of which was isolated from the rest by walls and towers, as a means of security against the turbulent populace, whose insubordination was proverbial and whose loyalty was uncertain even under the iron hand of the most powerful ruler. To one of these wards the Christians, to another the Jews, were restricted, and, from their precincts, after sunset, no individual could emerge without incurring the penalty of death. From every gate a broad and well-paved highway led to the frontier cities of the empire,—Malaga, Badajoz, Astorga, Talavera, Toledo, Saragossa, Merida. The alcazar of the khalifs, built upon the site of the palace of the Visigothic kings, was of great size and impregnable strength. It probably included one of the wards above referred to, and contained the citadel, the official residence of the principal dignitaries of the court, and the barracks of the royal body-guard, as well as the quarters of an innumerable retinue of dependents and slaves. Near it was the gate leading to the bridge over the Guadalquivir, the scene of more than one historical event which changed the fortunes of the reigning dynasty in eras of revolution and disaster. That bridge was one of the grandest works ever designed by Roman genius. It was twelve hundred feet in length by thirty in breadth, and stood ninety feet above the water. It was defended by nineteen turrets. Built during the reign of Augustus, and in good repair to-day, it has served the purposes of war and commerce for sixty generations.

The inexhaustible fertility of the soil of Andalusia yielded, in the greatest profusion, the most delicious products of every clime. The necessaries of life were to be procured for a trifle. Every description of food was offered for sale in the markets, and luscious fruits and vegetables, classed as expensive luxuries or unattainable in the capitals of Christian Europe, were enjoyed in Cordova by persons in the most moderate circumstances. The attire of the humblest citizen indicated an unusual degree of personal comfort; professional mendicancy, that curse of Oriental communities, was discouraged and practically unknown; the worthy sufferer found a ready welcome in the public hospital, while the impostor was scourged into unwonted activity by the officers of justice.

The suburbs of Cordova, exclusive of the royal residence of Medina-al-Zahrâ, which was superior to the others in extent and beauty, were twenty-one in number. They bore romantic names suggested by their charming situations, and the admiring homage they received from the people, such as "The Vale of Paradise," "The Beautiful Valley," "The Path of Roses," "The Garden of Wonders." While subject to the jurisdiction of the central municipal power, they, in other respects, presented the aspect of a series of independent communities, provided with every necessity and luxury required by a numerous and thriving population,—shops, baths, inns, warehouses, markets, and mosques. Two occupied the opposite bank of the river; the others encircled the Moorish capital with a girdle of dazzling white villas, interspersed with groves of palms rising amidst a wealth of tropical verdure. For miles in every direction were orange orchards, whose sweetness impregnated the air for many a league. Rivulets and fountains diffused through street and garden a delicious coolness. Blossoms of gaudy hue and overpowering fragrance grew in profusion along the avenues. The columns in the court-yards were entwined with roses. Along the stone causeways radiating in every direction from the city trooped caravans of plodding camels, laden with products of the art and industry of Europe, Africa, and Asia; or, riding swift Andalusian horses, sped the royal couriers with despatches for the governors of the distant states of the empire. The majestic bridge across the Guadalquivir was, from sunrise to sunset, crowded to its utmost capacity with traders, servants, soldiers, mounted cavaliers, and beasts of burden.

The pampered tastes of the khalifs found their utmost gratification in the comparative seclusion of the ten villas which the latter possessed in the environs of their capital. Here were provided means of sensual enjoyment that far eclipsed, in extent and elegance, the voluptuous attractions and wanton extravagance of Capri, Sybaris, and Antioch. These abodes of pleasure, contrived with all the skill of the Saracen architect, were surrounded by grounds that exhibited to perfection the peculiar and surprising effects of the horticulture of Asia. Airy galleries, sustained by columns of polished marble, were brilliant with the beautiful stuccoes of Damascus. The mural decoration, imitated from the textile fabrics of India, partook of all the richness of silk brocade interwoven with threads of gold. The sparkling mosaics of Constantinople, lavished in gay profusion upon arch and alcove, contributed their share towards the embellishment of these enchanting retreats. Curious lattices of alabaster admitted a subdued and uncertain light. Sentences from the works of famous poets—most of them of an irreverent and bacchanalian character—met the eye upon cornice, architrave, and capital. The basins, wherein dashed, with musical tinkle, the jets of countless fountains, were of massy silver. The furniture was of aloe, sandal-wood, ebony, and ivory, delicately carved and inlaid. Lovely female slaves of every nationality, accomplished in the arts of poetry and music, and educated under the supervision of famous instructors, ministered to the wants of the Commander of the Faithful, entertained his leisure with animated and intellectual discourse, or relieved his care with their endearments and with the charms of song. Vast numbers of white and black eunuchs—the former selected for their beauty, the latter prized for their lofty stature and transcendent ugliness—glided mysteriously through the shadowy apartments, or, armed with jewelled weapons, guarded the forbidden portals of the harem.

In the gardens, the fertile imagination of the Oriental artist rioted in its marvellous creations. The walks, paved with colored pebbles, formed arabesques of quaint and varied patterns. The hedges were fashioned into imitations of fortified walls, with battlement, tower, and barbican. From concealed sources, fountains cast at regular intervals their waters high into the air. Labyrinths, from whose intricate paths escape was impossible without a guide, beset the way of the incautious guest. The scene was diversified with lakes, upon whose crystal surface floated swans and other water-fowl of silver; by grottos, whose cool recesses were suggestive of luxurious repose; by arcades of glossy evergreen; by plants of variegated foliage whose tints, at a distance, resembled a surface of rich enamel; by enchanting vistas, where clumps of odoriferous shrubs and colored grasses, interspersed with beds of brilliant flowers arranged in sentences expressing wishes for the happiness of the monarch and the glorification of Allah, covered the landscape like a piece of tapestry, more gorgeous than the most exquisite creations of the weaver that ever issued from the looms of Persia or Flanders.

The oldest and one of the most famous of these villas was Rusafah, the favorite resort of Abd-al-Rahman I. It was not merely a place of relaxation and enjoyment, for in its garden was first attempted the scientific cultivation of the botanical treasures of the

East. Ever devoted to the romantic traditions of his Syrian home, the exiled prince had named his palace after one possessed by his ancestors in the vicinity of Damascus.

The other suburban residences of the khalifs were each distinguished by some peculiarity of location, structure, or ornament. One was famous for its innumerable fountains. In another were exhibited, in their greatest variety and beauty, the charming effects of floral decoration. A third, from the magnificent view it afforded, was called " The Abode of the Fortunate." A profusion of mosaics and enamels had acquired for the most ornate of all the significant and appropriate name of " The Palace of the Diadem."

To the northwest of Cordova, at the base of the picturesque Sierra Morena, three miles from the city, yet connected with it by a succession of mansions and gardens, was the palace and suburb of Medina-al-Zahrâ. Its traditional origin partakes of the romance which so frequently embellishes the history of the Orient. It is related by the Moorish historians that a wealthy concubine of Abd-al-Rahman III., being on her death-bed and desirous that her last act should be the fulfilment of one of the noblest obligations of her religion, requested that the wealth she owed to the generosity of her royal lover be expended in the ransom of Moslem captives. Anxious to comply with this pious request, the Khalif sent messengers to the Christian states of the North, but, even with the diligent co-operation of their princes, who were his allies or tributaries, he was unable to find a single slave to be redeemed from bondage. Then, at the suggestion of another concubine, the favorite of his harem, whose name, Al-Zahrâ, in the poetic nomenclature of the Arabs means The Blossom, he determined to use the treasure in building a palace whose unparalleled splendor might form a fitting climax to the glories of his reign. A third of the public revenues, a sum which, without including those derived from the taxes of Jews and Christians and the fifth of the spoils of battle, amounted annually to more than two million pieces of gold, was also devoted to the work by the enthusiastic monarch. Ten thousand laborers and twenty-eight thousand beasts of burden were daily employed. The minuteness and prolixity with which are described the quantity of materials used and their value, the nationalities of the artisans and their remuneration, as detailed by the Arab chroniclers, are instructive though tedious, and impart an air of veracity to a narrative which would otherwise almost transcend belief. The plans were drawn by the most eminent architects of Constantinople. The walls, substantially built of stone, measured seventeen hundred by twenty-seven hundred cubits, and were provided with all the outworks and defences of a formidable castle. As was the case with the Great Mosque, the materials of the edifice were collected largely from foreign sources and were put together under the supervision of Byzantine artificers, aided by the most skilful native workmen. Its construction was supervised by the Khalif in person, who, in his devotion to the undertaking, having absented himself for three successive Fridays from the services of the Mosque, was publicly rebuked by the kadi for this flagrant neglect of duty.

The quarries of Numidia, Greece, and Andalusia contributed supplies of the finest marble and alabaster. Capitals of Roman origin were furnished by the ruined temples of Narbonne, Tarragona, Utica, and Carthage. The Byzantine emperor sent as a present to his ally a number of columns, whose beautiful tints of green and rose called forth the admiration of all who beheld them.

The palace was divided into three distinct sections. On the slope of the mountain rose the magnificent alcazar, within whose apartments were lodged the monarch and the members of his seraglio, composed of sixty-three hundred women, with their slaves and attendants. The number of the latter was, all told, seventeen thousand.

Lower down, towards the city, were the quarters of the body-guard, the eunuchs, and the pages of the court, for whose accommodation four hundred houses were required. Next in order came the gardens, filled with choice plants and delicious fruits, and diversified with artificial cascades and lakes abounding in goldfish. Within the precincts of this horticultural paradise were to be encountered every specimen of the extensive flora—both native and foreign—known to the accomplished botanists of Andalusia. Hedges of myrtle, box, and laurel, trimmed in fantastic designs, separated the broad and winding walks of rustic mosaic. Summer-houses and shady bowers invited to the siesta after exposure to the glare and heat of a semi-tropical sun. The prolific ingenuity of the hydraulic engineer had exhausted itself in the wonderful distribution of streams of water—in the varying play of a thousand fountains; in miniature rivulets, whose tiny channels were chiselled in the balustrades of marble staircases; in fairy grottos, over whose roofs of painted glass the spray from revolving jets shone with kaleidoscopic effect; in roaring cascades, from whose sombre depths were constantly visible the iridescent hues of the rainbow. Some of the fountains were masterpieces of the sculptor's art. Two of them are mentioned as being especially remarkable. The larger was of gilded bronze with human figures elegantly carved in relief, and came from Constantinople. The basin of the other, of green marble, was of Syrian workmanship, and disposed about its rim were twelve grotesque representations of animals and birds, cast in gold, and glittering with jewels. From the mouths of these curious monsters jets of water were projected into the basin below.

Over the main portal of the edifice, carved in alabaster with consummate skill, stood the effigy of the lovely slave whose suggestion had evoked this palace of the genii, and from whom it had received its name.

The portion of the gorgeous edifice upon which the Moorish chronicler most delights to dwell was the central pavilion. Elevated on a terrace of white marble, in both its exterior and interior it afforded a dazzling example of the wealth of its owner and of the exquisite taste of its architect.

Circular in form, its dome was supported by columns of precious marble and rock-crystal, whose capitals were inlaid with pearls and rubies. The walls and dome were of translucent onyx; the roof of gold and silver tiles, placed in alternate rows. The spandrels and the inscriptions of the frieze exhibited the imperishable tints and jewelled play of Byzantine mosaic. Doors of odoriferous woods inlaid with ivory, ebony, and gold, enriched with gems of great value, gave access to this magnificent apartment. Under the centre of the dome stood a movable basin of porphyry filled with quicksilver. In some manner, probably by the use of mirrors, the rays of the sun could be concentrated upon the metal and the basin caused to rotate rapidly by hidden mechanism, casting blinding flashes of light in every direction; dazzling the beholders with the intolerable glare, and striking with amazement and terror the ambassadors of foreign powers, for whose benefit this ingenious contrivance, which would seem rather to belong to the stage than to the audience-chamber of a powerful monarch, was repeatedly exhibited.

The hall of this pavilion was the scene of many of the most imposing ceremonies and remarkable events in the history of the khalifate. Here, the heir to the crown was publicly acknowledged and invested with his dignity. Here, the princes of the blood, the magnates of the realm, the heads of departments, the governors of provinces, assembled after the death of the sovereign to swear allegiance to his successor. Here, also, the envoys of the monarchies of Europe and the East were granted an audience under circumstances far exceeding in splendor the boasted pomp of Constantinople, Aix-la-Chapelle, and Bagdad. Under this translucent and glittering dome were received the Kings of Leon and Navarre, suppliants for the favor and alliance of the hereditary enemy of their people and their faith. On these occasions was displayed all the ostentatious magnificence of which the most brilliant court in Europe was capable. The decorations of the audience-chamber—already unparalleled in richness—were heightened with silken carpets and hangings of cloth of silver. The Khalif, seated on a throne blazing with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, was surrounded by his family and his courtiers attired in their robes of state. About the pavilion and around the terrace was marshalled the royal guard, unrivalled in the elegance of its appointments by any similar body of soldiers in the world. The white robes of the eunuchs and slaves formed an appropriate background to the gorgeous picture, which imparted to the bewildered barbarians of the German forests and the Pyrenean mountains a startling impression of the civilization and resources of the detested infidel.

The mosque of Medina-al-Zahrâ corresponded in its general details with the palace, for the convenience of whose occupants it was erected. In some respects, it surpassed in the elegance of its ornamentation the great temple of the capital, after whose plan it was modelled. It contained five aisles; its gilding and mosaics exhibited the finished labors of the Asiatic artist; its sanctuary and pulpit were marvels of Oriental taste and skill. A minaret of polished stone, ten cubits square and forty in height and covered with arabesques in relief, surmounted the graceful edifice. The court was paved with wine-colored marble, and provided with a fountain elaborately carved and gilded.

From a royal villa, Medina-al-Zahrâ insensibly expanded into a miniature city. Around the palace clustered the luxurious dwellings of the courtiers, the merchants, and the officers of the army. The avenues were lined with trees, whose foliage formed a continuous arch. Not a house could be seen that was not embosomed in gardens abounding with gushing waters and rare exotics. Even the sides of the Sierra had been stripped of the sombre growth of evergreens which had originally covered them, and, planted with fig- and almond-trees, appeared in all the beauty of luxuriant foliage and fragrant blossoms. Not far away, extensive plantations of the sweetest of flowers gave to the locality the name of Gebal-al-Wardat, The Mountain of the Rose.

Three hundred baths, exclusive of those appropriated to the use of the imperial household, contributed to the health and the ceremonial purity of the inhabitants. The favorite residence of the khalifs, Medina-al-Zahrâ became the seat of the muses, the home of the arts, the centre of the intellectual society of the empire. Institutions of learning sprang up within its borders. The literary contests which constituted an unique and prominent feature of the Andalusian court were celebrated there in the presence of the monarch and the companions of his greatness and his leisure. Forty years were required for its construction, twenty-five under Abd-al-Rahman and fifteen under his son Al-Hakem. Its cost represents, at a modern valuation, the enormous sum of one hundred and fifty million dollars. Experienced travellers of every nation pronounced, without a dissenting voice, that the world did not possess, in point of picturesque situation, royal magnificence, and architectural beauty, a rival of the incomparable city and palace of Medina-al-Zahrâ.

It is difficult to conceive, from their present forlorn and deserted condition, of the aspect once presented by the environs of imperial Cordova. Independent of its populous suburbs, the commercial tributaries of the capital represented vast mercantile interests, and furnished support to multitudes of industrious artisans. Five thousand mills lined the banks of the rapid Guadalquivir. Encouraged by the profit derived from a regular and extensive trade with foreign nations, manufacturing establishments had sprung up in every city of importance. Each of these towns had its mosques and its imams, who, in addition to their ecclesiastical duties, discharged the functions of magistrates and reported regularly to the authorities of the capital.

In the patronage of letters, Abd-al-Rahman III. was in no respect inferior to any of his most liberal predecessors. He himself excelled in improvisation, that talent so highly prized by his countrymen. His fame and his munificence allured to the court of Cordova the most accomplished scholars from every region of the world. The capital abounded with colleges, academies, lyceums, and other educational foundations. The medical profession had attained to a high standard of excellence, and the Jewish surgeons of Cordova were universally recognized as unrivalled in the extent and variety of their knowledge. Many physicians held important employments under the government, deserved tributes to their skill;

but such was their charity that the doors of even the most distinguished of them were always open to the poor, and their gratuitous ministrations at the service of the most humble sufferer. The sciences of astronomy and chemistry, based upon observations at Bagdad and experiments at Cairo and Damascus, had made an unprecedented advance. In the royal alcazar, in the palaces of princes, in the mansions of the rich, in the homes of the learned, the mind of the seeker after knowledge was daily exercised by the discussion of subjects of universal interest, by the prosecution of scientific inquiry, by lectures, by improvisations, by the spirited contests of poets for literary supremacy. In every calling and profession, in every position of life, the useful and the ornamental arts, the noble and elegant pursuits of literature were cultivated by both sexes with an ardor akin to enthusiasm.

The name of Abd-al-Rahman III., glorious in the annals of Moorish Spain, has not, however, escaped the condemnation of history. His great deeds; his triumphs in war and diplomacy; his skill in the reconciliation of adverse factions; his generous clemency; his encouragement of letters, may well be the subject of extravagant eulogy. But the sensual passions of his nature bordered upon insanity; and his character was defiled by that nameless and unnatural vice which, practised and even defended by one of the most famous of the Greek philosophers, has from the earliest times been the blemish and the reproach of Oriental civilization.

The infirmities of age and the irksomeness of satiety embittered the declining years of the Khalif. He virtually abandoned the administration of the empire to his heir, Al-Hakem. Renouncing the gay frivolities of the court, he attached himself to a fanatic named Abu-Ayub, whose ascetic manners and ostentatious poverty were received by the vulgar as evidences of extraordinary sanctity. In the society of this singular companion he passed much of his time in fasting, in prayer, in the distribution of alms. After his death, in a journal which recorded his most secret thoughts, were found the following significant reflections on the disappointments of life and the delusive attractions of human greatness and imperial ambition. "I have reigned fifty years in peace and in glory, beloved by my people, feared by my enemies, respected by my allies. My friendship has been sought by the great kings of the earth. I have wanted nothing that the heart of man could desire,—neither renown, nor power, nor pleasure. During this long life, I have counted the days when I have enjoyed complete happiness—and they amount to only fourteen! Praise be to Him who alone possesses eternal glory and omnipotence, there is no other God than He!"

CHAPTER XIII

REIGN OF AL-HAKEM II.

961–976

Splendid Ceremonial at the Accession of Al-Hakem II.—His Wise and Prudent Measures—Ordoño seeks an Audience—His Baseness—Successful Expedition against the Christians—Disturbances in Africa—Army of the Khalif Defeated—The Berber Chieftains are corrupted, and their Forces disband—Importance of Cordova as a Religious Centre—Description of the Great Mosque—Death of Al-Hakem—His Literary Attainments—His Patronage of Letters—The Library—Institutions of Learning—General Prevalence of Education — Public Improvements — The Khalif the Exemplar of the Highest Culture of his Age—Prosperity of the Empire.

AT the death of Abd-al-Rahman III. the Hispano-Arab empire seemed, to all unfamiliar with the defects of the Moslem constitution, invulnerable to the attacks of foreign or domestic enemies. The wise dispositions of that accomplished ruler had, for a time, reconciled the differences arising from tribal antipathy and religious discord. The employment of mercenaries, constituting an army which could not be corrupted, and whose isolation from the seditious populace was the most effectual guaranty of its fidelity, apparently assured the perpetuity of a system which a profound and statesmanlike policy had established. The administration was directed by capable and experienced ministers. The public revenues far exceeded in amount those of the wealthiest contemporaneous nations. Obedient to the law of political attraction, which like gravity in the material world draws the weaker to the stronger power, neighboring kingdoms, although separated from the khalifate by the most powerful motives that can influence humanity—by the antagonism of race, by the prejudices of religion, by the memory of generations of incessant warfare, by hostile traditions which involved the loss of an empire and the subjection of its people—had acknowledged the supremacy of the Ommeyade princes. In the humiliating character of suppliants for the favor of an hereditary foe, the sovereigns of Leon and Navarre had implored the aid of the infidel, and the former of these had regained possession of his dominions under a treaty which implied, if it did not actually express, conditions of vassalage reflecting little credit upon the successor of the haughty Visigoths. Every consideration which contributes to inspire the respect and admiration of mankind lent its assistance to exalt the fame and greatness of the court of Cordova. The most distinguished monarchs solicited the friendship of the Khalif. His capital was the literary centre of the Western world. The intellectual activity there displayed had never been equalled since the glorious days when Grecian genius immortalized the schools of Ionia and Attica. The Moslem fleets controlled the Mediterranean. The mechanical arts, the science of agriculture, the various branches of foreign commerce and domestic traffic, had, under a well-grounded feeling of public security, received a prodigious and unexampled impulse. It was, therefore, under the most happy auspices that Al-Hakem, at the age of forty-eight, with a character long considered the embodiment of all princely virtues, assumed the supreme direction of affairs.

On the day following the death of Abd-al-Rahman, the accession of his son was celebrated with greater splendor than had yet distinguished this important function since the foundation of the Western empire. Magnificently attired, the great officers of the khalifate attended to swear allegiance to the new sovereign. After the members of the royal family, the chief officials, the ministers of state, the kadis, and the chamberlains had taken the oath, they administered it, in turn, to the host of retainers and subordinates of the royal household. The pomp displayed on this occasion was worthy of the most powerful, the most opulent, and the most luxurious monarchy in Europe. The ceremony was held under the central pavilion of the palace of Medina-al-Zahrâ, whose decorations, sparkling in the sunlight, seemed to realize the gorgeous dreams of Oriental enchantment. The eight brothers of Al-Hakem were escorted to the palace with all the honors due to their rank; but it could not escape the notice of those princes that the strong guard which surrounded them, and lined the entrance of their apartments, was less a manifestation of respect than a menacing precaution against treason. The viziers, invested with their robes and insignia of office, and the nobles took up their positions behind the members of the Khalif's family, who stood on either side of the throne. Beyond them, crowding the ample space of the rotunda and even filling the adjacent apartments, were the imperial magistrates, the generals of the army, the provincial governors, and the vast crowd of public functionaries summoned from the capital as well as from the neighboring cities of Andalusia to render homage to and assist at the inauguration of the Commander of the Faithful. The eunuchs, that class of monsters which has always sought indemnity for its degradation by the acquisition of power and wealth, which has never failed to revenge itself upon society by the ruin of the government which tolerated its institution, and whose preponderance in the political system of the khalifate had become portentous and appalling, were present by thousands. They were marshalled according to nationality, rank, and the nature of the service to which they were assigned. Most of them were clad in white tunics embroidered with gold, white being at the same time the distinctive color and the badge of mourning of the Ommeyades. The servitors of the harem were drawn up in the hall leading to the audience-chamber; they were both white and black; all were sheathed in shining armor inlaid with gold and silver, and the hilts and scabbards of their scimetars sparkled with costly gems. The marble terrace by which the pavilion was approached was guarded by Sclavonians splendidly mounted, whose arms and equipments were not inferior in richness to those of the magnificent array within. Outside, and reaching to the gate of the capital, were ranged, in exact and motionless order, the royal archers, the slaves, and the various divisions of the garrison.

The imposing ceremonial concluded, the remains of Abd-al-Rahman were committed to the tomb. The active mind of Al-Hakem was at once applied to the consideration of the details which concerned the administration of every department of his empire. The ministers of his father were confirmed, without exception. Officials were despatched to exact the allegiance of the walis of distant provinces. The troops were reviewed, and a general inspection of the army ordered. A hajib, or prime minister, was appointed, for the tastes of Al-Hakem were inclined rather to the quiet and refining pursuits of literature than to official drudgery and the responsibilities incident to the administration of a great and turbulent monarchy. In this respect he ignored the oft-repeated counsels of his father, who, conscious of the vast power wielded by a hajib, and which, in the hands of an ambitious and unscrupulous statesman, might be attended with disastrous consequences, had endeavored to impress upon his heir the policy, and even the necessity, of retaining unimpaired the authority conferred by the exalted office of Commander of Believers. The individual selected for this important post was Giafar-al-Asklabi, a Slave, whose caste and nationality seemed to Al-Hakem a sufficient warrant for his good behavior, an opinion subsequently justified by the wisdom and tact he displayed in the discharge of his official duties. His appointment was followed, according to the custom of the court, by the delivery of a magnificent present to the Khalif, consisting, in this instance, of richly apparelled slaves, and arms and armor inlaid with gold.

The news of the death of Abd-al-Rahman had been received with pretended grief and secret delight by the sovereigns of Leon and Navarre. The prestige of the former Khalif, and his ability to enforce his demands, had been repeatedly demonstrated by the eventful transactions of his long and glorious reign. The blackened fields and dismantled castles of the frontier, the heaps of bones bleaching on many a battle-field, bore silent but conclusive testimony to his ruthless hostility and to the prowess of his armies. But the character of his successor was, as yet, undeveloped. A life already advanced beyond middle age had been distinguished by none of those martial deeds which elicit the applause of a subject and awaken the respect and the apprehensions of an enemy. The predilections of the new Khalif for a sedentary life, and his intimate relations with the learned, were viewed with contempt by the barbarous Christians, who considered war as the peculiar calling of a man of spirit, and the acquisition of knowledge as only fit for monks, an order whose pacific occupations did not, nevertheless, exclude even its members from the profession of arms. In those early times, while not as yet expressly sanctioned by the authority of the Papacy, the violation of an engagement made with the enemies of the Church was already considered a meritorious action, to be governed rather by motives of expediency than by any considerations of morality and national honor. The treaty, by which Sancho had stipulated to deliver to the Khalif a certain number of fortresses in return for the restoration of his crown, had not been carried out by the King of Leon. The temptation to violate it, or at least to elude its performance, now became irresistible. To the demands of Al-Hakem, Sancho returned evasive and temporizing answers. The King of Navarre, doubtless acting in collusion with his neighbor, was even less tractable. Ferdinand Gonzalez, who had fallen into the hands of the latter, was held a close prisoner at Pampeluna, and the Khalif, who was anxious, at all hazards, to obtain possession of the person of this formidable adversary, promised to abate a portion of his demands in case Garcia would agree to send his illustrious captive to Cordova. The King of Navarre not only refused, but actually liberated the Count of Castile, with the understanding that he should expel his son-in-law, Ordoño IV., who had sought a refuge at Burgos, and should at once declare war against the Khalif. Ferdinand promptly fulfilled his engagements. The unfortunate Ordoño was torn from his family and ignominiously driven across the border; at his summons to arms the old warriors of the Count flocked to his standard, and the settlements of Estremadura and Andalusia, long accustomed to peace, once more experienced the deplorable evils of partisan hostility. Accompanied by only a score of retainers, who, of all his numerous retinue, were all that were willing to share his uncertain fortunes, Ordoño, journeying through the enemy's country, reached the city of Medina-Celi. Here, as in all the empire, the streets resounded with the din of arms, for Al-Hakem, convinced that the respect of the Christians could only be preserved by a display of force, was everywhere making active preparations for war. The spirit of the royal fugitive rose at the inspiring sight, and, hoping that by proper management the military successes of Al-Hakem might be made to enure to his own advantage, he requested of the governor of the city a safe-conduct to Cordova and permission to place himself under the protection of the Khalif. His wish was readily acceded to, and a troop of cavalry was detailed to escort him to the capital. The route passing near the royal cemetery, Ordoño asked to be shown the tomb of Abd-al-Rahman III. This having been done, he dismounted, uncovered his head, and, kneeling by the grave of the monarch who in life had been his most inveterate enemy, he prayed long and fervently for the repose and welfare of his soul. A few days afterwards he was received by the Khalif in the palace of Medina-al-Zahrâ. As a token of respect and an evidence of vassalage, he was required to assume the white robes of the Ommeyades. Obeydallah-Ibn-Kasim, Archbishop of Toledo, and Walid-Ibn-Khaizoran, Judge of the Christians of Cordova, whose Arabic names seem strangely at variance with the offices they administered, escorted him to the audience-chamber; their presence being necessary, both as interpreters and to afford information on points of etiquette rigorously exacted by the punctilious court of Cordova, and concerning which it was justly conjectured the former associations of a barbarian ruler had left him entirely unacquainted.

The introduction of the Christian prince was attended with the pomp ordinarily displayed at the reception of the greatest kings and their ambassadors. The body-guard of the Khalif was drawn up in all the panoply of gleaming weapons and costly armor.

The officials were present in their robes of state. Around the throne were ranged the princes and the officers of the royal household. An innumerable army of subordinates filled the halls and lined the terraces. Through the gilded lattices of the harem, which overlooked the hall of audience, the sheen of jewels and the sparkle of bright eyes occasionally revealed the presence of the beauties whom Oriental jealousy only on rare occasions permitted to lend the lustre of their charms to an important ceremony.

The Leonese nobles and their king moved with downcast heads through the grim and lowering ranks of the soldiery, whose fierce looks so terrified them that they endeavored to fortify themselves by the recitation of prayers and frequent repetitions of the sign of the cross. After numerous genuflexions Ordoño approached the Khalif, who gave him his hand to kiss. He was conducted to a seat at some distance from the throne, and received from Al-Hakem the flattering assurance that even more favors than he desired would be accorded to him. It was then that the unspeakable baseness of Ordoño's character disclosed itself. He had frequently since his entrance into the Moorish dominions given evidence of a lack of royal dignity and of a total absence of those manly qualities which elicit sympathy for greatness in misfortune. He had courted the favor of the commander of the escort which had accompanied him to the capital, by flattery, by gifts, by the most ignoble concessions. With an hypocrisy that did not impose upon the keen-witted Andalusians, he had bowed in well-feigned grief before the tomb of Abd-al-Rahman. With a sycophancy that disgusted the objects of it, he had fawned upon the officials of the court. But the time was now come when these disgraceful exhibitions of voluntary self-abasement were to be eclipsed, and the depth of his degradation attained.

As soon as the speech of Al-Hakem had been translated to him, without making allowance for the courtly exaggeration it implied, he arose and said: "I am the slave of the Commander of the Faithful; I trust in his magnanimity; I seek my support in his lofty virtues; I give him full power over me and mine!" He then, in language worthy only of the meanest vassal, begged the aid of the Khalif in the recovery of his throne, and, in conclusion, contrasted his own voluntary submission with the conduct of his cousin Sancho, who had been compelled by Abd-al-Rahman to render him homage as a condition of the treaty. Al-Hakem listened with ill-concealed contempt to his harangue, promised that all his wishes should be fulfilled, and that he should be guaranteed against molestation from his enemies. The interview terminated, the eunuchs escorted the Leonese from the pavilion. Ordoño displayed little less servility towards the Vizier Giafar than he had shown to his master, and was with difficulty prevented from kissing the hand of that dignitary. Having perceived in an antechamber a seat which he was informed was sometimes used by the Khalif, he grovelled before it with as much apparent reverence as if it had been a sacred reliquary of the most undoubted virtue.

A splendid palace was assigned as a residence to the King and his suite; they were all clothed with robes of honor,—a mark of the highest distinction among Orientals,—and a number of valuable presents sent from the court further assured them of the generous sympathy of their benefactor. In a few days a treaty was concluded, by which Ordoño pledged himself to maintain peace with Al-Hakem and perpetual war with the Count of Castile. The flower of the Moorish troops, commanded by Ghalib, the ablest of the imperial generals, was ordered to make the campaign, and the Archbishop of Toledo and the Bishop and the

Judge of Cordova were designated to accompany the army, not so much to assist the pusillanimous monarch by their counsels as to carefully note his behavior, and see that he was guilty of nothing that could contribute to the injury of the Khalif, or even remotely affect in an unfavorable manner the objects of his ambition.

In the mean time Sancho had taken the alarm. When he learned of the success of Ordoño, he realized that he had presumed too much upon the peaceful disposition and epicurean tastes of Al-Hakem. It was no secret that a powerful army was mustering to invade his dominions. By the artifices of the enemy, its numbers were purposely multiplied. His popularity had never been great, and his restoration had been accomplished by means abhorrent to a large number of his subjects. Many of his vassals could not be depended upon. The great province of Galicia, a fief of the crown of Leon, refused to acknowledge his title, and its count held language that indicated that he only sought a favorable opportunity to declare himself independent. Under the circumstances but one course was open to Sancho, and he sent an embassy to Cordova to state that he was willing to perform, without delay, the conditions of the treaty he had concluded with Abd-al-Rahman.

The duplicity of Al-Hakem, a defect happily rare in the annals of his race and which reflects such discredit upon his name, now became apparent. He violated, without compunction, the compact he had made with Ordoño. The latter, overcome with disappointment and mortification at the failure of his hopes, gave himself up to melancholy, and died the victim of his own abasement and credulity in the gilded prison which had been set apart as his abode in the environs of the Moslem capital.

His rival removed, and the alliance of Ferdinand Gonzalez assured, Sancho concluded that the occasion was most opportune for a further repudiation of his engagements. He accordingly defied the Khalif, and the latter at once proclaimed the Holy War. The army of invasion was commanded by Ghalib. The Count of Castile was defeated in a great battle. The governor of Saragossa, Yahya-Ibn-Mohammed, easily worsted the King of Navarre. The important fortresses of San Estevan de Gormaz and Calahorra, which had been stormed and destroyed, were rebuilt, provided with Moorish garrisons, and added to the dominions of the khalifate. The Arab army wasted the borders of Catalonia with fire and sword; for two counts of that principality, Miron and Borel, endowed with more hardihood than discretion, had been prevailed upon by the King of Navarre to join the confederacy, and were now condemned to expiate their breach of faith by the pillage of their cities and the misery of their subjects. Everywhere the arms of the Moslems were triumphant. The enemies who had confidently reckoned on the incapacity and inertness supposed to attach to a literary life, and the well-known aversion of Al-Hakem to the military profession, were compelled to acknowledge the wisdom of his dispositions and the energy with which he carried them into execution. One after another sued for peace. Even from distant Galicia came an embassy, headed by a noble matron, the mother of a count, who was entertained with the distinguished courtesy for which the court of Cordova was famous, and was dismissed with gifts whose splendor dazzled the eyes of a barbarian princess born and bred amidst the barren slopes and poverty-stricken hamlets of the Pyrenees.

This successful campaign closed the military operations of Al-Hakem in the North. He had taught his perfidious adversaries a severe but salutary lesson. Whatever inclination to renew hostilities they might have entertained, their own dissensions precluded its indulgence. War soon broke out between Galicia and Leon. The rebellious province, which aspired to independence, was in a fair way to be conquered, when a resort to treachery accomplished an end unattainable by the expedients of honorable warfare. Poison was administered to Sancho at a conference on the banks of the Douro. The King of Leon died after some days in excruciating agony; his son Ramiro, who succeeded him, was a child of five years, and the martial aristocracy declined to recognize the authority of an infant, controlled by his aunt, the nun Elvira, whose doubtful qualifications for the government of a kingdom had been acquired in the solitude of a cloister. Elsewhere, also, in the North, matters were propitious to the security and prosperity of the khalifate. A great army of Danes, who had served under the standard of the Duke of Normandy, poured down upon and devastated the plains and valleys of Galicia. Finally, the death of Ferdinand Gonzalez freed Al-Hakem from his most dangerous enemy, and during the remainder of his life the inroads of the Christians ceased to excite the alarm of his subjects or to disturb the peace of his empire.

While permanent safety had been secured in the North, on the side of Africa the danger was constant and menacing. The wild tribes of the Desert had never forgotten with what facility their forefathers had traversed the strait and subjugated a populous and extensive monarchy. The covetous eye of the half-naked Mauritanian robber, whose prowess had at times prevailed over the discipline of the Roman legions, was ever turned towards the beautiful cities of Andalusia, with their teeming bazaars, their prodigious wealth, their palaces furnished with every appliance of luxury, their lovely and fascinating women. The instinct of conquest, the presentiment that one day the exploit of Tarik would be repeated, were inspired by hope and encouraged by tradition. It was not the masses alone who cherished these ominous aspirations. The princes of the various dynasties who, at different periods of its history, swayed the destinies of Al-Maghreb, had, without exception, regarded the riches of the Peninsula as lawful spoil, if not actually as a part of their patrimony. Its condition—political, social, religious, commercial—was as familiar to them as the domestic polity of their own dominions. Their spies were to be found in the great emporiums of trade, in the most sequestered hamlets, in the ranks of the army, in the corridors of the palace, even in the bed-chamber of the khalif. Unknown and often unsuspected, their influence had been felt in many a bloody insurrection, in the decisive moment of many an eventful day. Never for a moment did they abandon the long-nourished project of conquest; never did they renounce the ambition—destined unhappily to be realized—of planting their victorious banners and erecting their throne on the banks of the famous Guadalquivir. Since the assumption of the suzerainty of the African provinces bordering on the Mediterranean by Abd-al-Rahman, the maintenance of that dignity had caused no inconsiderable drain on the treasury of the khalifate. Immense sums were annually transmitted to maintain troops, to support the pretensions of feeble vassals, and to bribe barbarian chieftains to refrain from ravaging the lands of their neighbors. No compensation was offered for the expense incurred except the negative and uncertain one implied by the temporary restraint of Berber invasion.

The attention of the Fatimites had been some years before directed towards the East, and, after a short and victorious struggle, the princes of that dynasty were enabled to remove the seat of their empire from the sandy plains of Mauritania to the inexhaustible Valley of the Nile. A great danger to the Ommeyade Empire of Spain was therefore apparently removed. At this time, Hassan-Ibn-Kenun, the last survivor of the Edrisites, exercised a precarious sovereignty over that portion of the African coast of which Tangier was the capital. A nominal vassal of Al-Hakem, his loyalty was largely dependent upon the fears excited by the encroachments of his neighbors, and when Abu-al-Fotuh, the representative of the Fatimites, invaded his dominions, the allegiance of Ibn-Kenun was, without hesitation, transferred to the Khalif of Egypt.

The revolt of Ibn-Kenun, and the alarming progress made by the Fatimite viceroy, impressed upon Al-Hakem the necessity for immediate and decisive action. With his customary diligence, he issued orders for the departure of a strong military and naval force to punish the treason of his vassal and overawe the fickle and perfidious chieftains of Africa. The object of the expedition was Tangier, the seat of the court and the residence of Ibn-Kenun. The Ommeyade fleet blockaded the harbor, and the troops, having encountered the enemy near the city, after a sharp engagement gained a decisive victory. But this success was of short duration. In the land of Al-Maghreb, swarming with active and warlike barbarians, the recruiting of an army was a matter of trifling difficulty. The Desert hordes, allured by the expectation of plunder and the excitement of arms, crowded to the camp of the Edrisite prince, who soon found himself once more able to tempt the fortunes of war. Another battle was fought; the troops of the Khalif sustained a demoralizing defeat; their general, Ibn-Tomlos, was left dead on the field, and the survivors who escaped the spears of the Mauritanian cavalry sought security behind the battlements of Tangier. The effect produced by this victory on the venal and inconstant people of Africa was serious. The reputation and the power of Ibn-Kenun received an extraordinary impulse. The petty vassals who for years had enjoyed the bounty of the Khalif hastened to renounce their allegiance. From far and near, along the sandy highways towards the camp of Ibn-Kenun, trooped the ferocious tribesmen whom no prince had yet been able to conciliate, and no government been able to civilize. No territory, except that occupied by a few fortified towns, remained loyal to Al-Hakem; even these places were in a state of siege; and it was evident that, unless energetic measures were taken to retrieve the disaster, the war-cry of the Berbers would soon be heard on the plains of Andalusia.

The Khalif was not unconscious of his danger. From every province of his dominions he summoned his bravest troops and his most experienced generals. The supreme command was entrusted to Ghalib, whose skill and valor had been signalized in the recent campaign against the Christians, and who was solemnly admonished, on peril of his life, to return victorious. It was not, however, to the uncertain event of battle that the Khalif unreservedly committed the destinies of his empire. The mercenary character of the Berber sheiks, always the partisans of him who bribed them most liberally, or who bribed them last, was what Al-Hakem depended upon, far more than upon either the tactics of his general or the courage of his soldiers. A great treasure was placed at the disposal of Ghalib, and he was instructed to spare no pains to detach from the army of Ibn-Kenun every chief of influence, without regard to the numbers of his following or the extravagance of his demands. In case he succeeded, he was ordered to conduct the family of Ibn-Kenun to Cordova. Having landed in safety, Ghalib studiously avoided a general engagement. His advance was impeded by the flying squadrons of Ibn-Kenun, who used every artifice to bring on a battle; but the cautious Ommeyade general, knowing that the fate of his sovereign, as well as his own life, depended on the issue of a conflict, had decided to trust to the secret and more certain means of corruption. Through the medium of trusty messengers, magnificent weapons, costly garments, and heaps of gold were clandestinely displayed before the greedy eyes of the Berber chieftains. Their constancy was not proof against this exhibition of wealth. They even competed for the infamous distinction of first deserting the standard of their commander; and, in a few days, Ibn-Kenun, abandoned by all but a handful of his old retainers, saw himself compelled to take refuge in a strong castle built on the summit of an isolated mountain called the Eagle's Rock, where he had, in prudent anticipation of a reverse of fortune, already conveyed his harem and his treasures.

The drafts of Ghalib on the royal treasury excited the astonishment and consternation of the Khalif. Such enormous expenses had never before been incurred in the conduct of a campaign; and Al-Hakem, suspecting that all of the public money had not been used to corrupt the Berbers, and that much of it had been diverted into private hands, determined, for the purpose of investigation, to send an officer experienced in matters of finance and clothed with almost despotic authority, who should not be confined to the mere duties of treasurer, but should also exercise the high and responsible functions of a general and a councillor of state. The individual selected for this delicate mission was Ibn-abi-Amir, a name of both glorious and sinister associations, which now appears for the first time in the annals of the Hispano-Arab domination. He was accompanied by a select body of troops commanded by Yahya-Ibn-Mohammed, Viceroy of the Northern Frontier, whom Al-Hakem, still fearful of the issue of the African campaign, had sent to reinforce the army of Ghalib.

The siege of the rebel fortress was pushed with energy, but its defences were so formidable that four months elapsed before the garrison could be brought to terms. Then the most favorable conditions were granted; the personal safety of the soldiers was guaranteed and their property kept inviolate; and the main article of the instructions of Al-Hakem, touching the conveyance of the Edrisites to Cordova, was acceded to, though not without manifest reluctance, which, however, was of little moment under circumstances where protest and resistance were equally unavailing. With the capture of the Eagle's Rock terminated the campaign in Africa. The remaining Edrisite princes, who had seen with dismay the sudden disappearance of the host of Ibn-Kenun, lost no time in making terms with the representatives of the Khalif. The entire region of Mauritania enjoyed a profound but delusive peace. The Berbers had retired to their solitudes to enjoy the reward of their treason, and to watch for another opportunity to dispose of their services to the highest bidder. The Fatimites, content with their recent acquisitions, left the administration of their African possessions to a viceroy, and, fascinated with the attractions of their new home on the Nile, did not seem, for the moment, desirous of prosecuting any further schemes of imperial aggrandizement.

Ghalib, escorting his illustrious prisoners, more than seventy in number, now returned to Cordova. From the hour of his landing at Algeziras, his march assumed the appearance of a military triumph. The line of march was obstructed by the throngs that, attracted by the novelty of the spectacle, had assembled from far and near. Every town and hamlet through which the cavalcade passed rang with the exultant shouts of a vast and excited multitude. The rich attire of the captives; their noble and dignified bearing; the romance attaching to the story of the foundation of their house; their descent from the family of the Prophet, certainly remote and probably fictitious, provoked the curiosity, if it did not excite the sympathy, of the elated populace, who only saw in their humiliation another addition to the glory of their sovereign. When the capital was approached, the Khalif came forth to meet the guard and their prisoners. As soon as his presence was known, Ibn-Kenun dismounted, knelt before him, and kissed his hand. Ghalib and his officers were received with all the honors due to men who under arduous circumstances have achieved success; the princes were conducted to a fortified palace in the city, and their attendants distributed in different localities, where their safe-keeping could be assured; the body-guard of the chief, consisting of seven hundred warriors of approved valor, was incorporated into a division of the army, and Al-Hakem could now congratulate himself that his decision and energy had compelled the respect of his enemies and had procured for his dominions the benefits of universal peace.

The inconstancy of fortune did not, however, permit the Khalif long to enjoy the leisure and the satisfaction to be derived from the indulgence of his literary tastes and the triumph of his arms. His health, impaired by intense and constant application to study, broke down. An attack of apoplexy admonished him that he must renounce the cares of state, and the conduct of the government was henceforth committed to his vizier Moshafi. The latter, a veteran and accomplished statesman, signalized his advent to uncontrolled power by the institution of many radical and greatly needed reforms. The department of finance, which had become the seat of corruption, was reorganized and administered with prudence and economy. The discipline of the army was improved. The former viceroy of the northern frontier, the gallant Yahya-Ibn-Mohammed, was recalled from command in Africa and reinstated in his former office, a measure that insured the tranquillity of the Christian states, which had recently developed symptoms of agitation, in several instances culminating in acts of open and destructive hostility. The interests of the Khalif in Mauritania were confirmed by the appointment of two native princes whose fidelity could be depended upon; and, by this stroke of policy, the vizier was enabled to remove all the Arab troops, except the garrisons of a few cities, to points where their services would be far more advantageous to the government, and, at the same time, less expensive to the treasury. The entertainment of the Edrisites, who maintained a pomp little inferior to that of the royal family itself, was a source of constant perplexity and annoyance to the economical minister. At length, profiting by the discontent induced by a sedentary life and a vigilant espionage ill-disguised under an appearance of liberty, he succeeded in persuading Ibn-Kenun to allow himself and his followers to be transported to Tunis, with the understanding that they should never again set foot on the soil of Mauritania. When the preparations for departure had been completed, the thrifty vizier partially indemnified the treasury for the expense caused by the involuntary guests of the Khalif by unceremoniously appropriating a large piece of ambergris, of immense value, which Ibn-Kenun considered the most precious object of all his possessions. After landing at Tunis, the exiles proceeded to Alexandria, where for many years they enjoyed the hospitality and protection of the Fatimite Khalif. From this time the princes of the

Edrisite family are no longer prominent in the revolutions of Northern Africa.

While Cordova was, by far, the most populous and magnificent city of Moorish Spain, it was indebted, in no small degree, for its superiority to the prestige derived from its position as a place of pilgrimage and the religious centre of the khalifate. Even in the eyes of the most implacable enemies of the Ommeyade dynasty, a sacred character invested the Western metropolis as the seat of one of the most famous shrines of Islam. Far more intense was the feeling of reverence in the minds of the devoted adherents of that dynasty. There was the throne of the Commander of the Faithful, in whose person the pious believer recognized not only the representative of a line of princes whose genius had added vast provinces to the Moslem empire, but also the venerated successor of the Arabian Prophet. From its gates had gone forth armies which had traversed the natural boundaries of the Peninsula, had occupied the fairest portion of France, and had repeatedly abased the pride of the scoffing infidel. Everywhere were visible significant tokens of Mussulman triumph and Christian humiliation. Its warehouses were filled with the plunder of churches. The inmates of monasteries were exposed by hundreds for sale in its markets. Its mosques had been raised by the labor of Christian captives. From the ceiling of the Djalma, the pride of all true believers, were suspended the bells of the Cathedral of Santiago, which even the vaunted power of the patron saint of the Asturias had been unable to save from the sacrilegious hand of the Moslem. No capital in Africa or Asia enjoyed a larger measure of military glory. No city in all the wide realm of Islam was so renowned for the munificence of its rulers, the wealth of its religious foundations, the learning and eloquence of its theologians, and the pomp of its worship.

On the right bank of the Guadalquivir stood the Great Mosque, in the eyes of the Mohammedans of Africa and Spain superior in sanctity to all other temples, save only the Kaaba. Founded by the first Abd-al-Rahman, fully as much from political motives as through religious zeal, it had been embellished by the wealth, the taste, the rivalry, and the enthusiasm of nine generations of sovereigns, having at their command the resources of one of the richest and most flourishing countries of the globe. By its erection, the power of the Western Khalifate had been established upon a firm and enduring basis, and the permanent independence of its dynasty assured. The more or less intimate relations hitherto maintained with the Moslem empires of Asia were severed; the nominal allegiance due to the monarchs of Damascus and Bagdad, persistently asserted by peremptory edicts and occasionally conceded by the rendition of a precarious tribute, was forever renounced. The aims of the founder, dictated by a political sagacity savoring of almost superhuman wisdom, were finally realized; and among the subjects and tributaries of the House of Ommeyah, proscribed by the rulers of Arabia, the sanctuary of the Mosque of his capital usurped the place once occupied by the temple of Mecca, the scene of the humiliations, the perils, and the triumphs of the Prophet. Thus, by a masterstroke of policy, which appealed alike to the worldly ambition and the religious pride of the people, was consolidated the authority of a new and progressive race of kings. Its associations especially struck the imagination of the pious Mohammedan. It occupied the site of the principal church of Gothic Cordova, which, in its turn, had been built upon the ruins of a Pagan temple. The stones of its foundation had been transported from Narbonne. The earth in which they were embedded had been stained with infidel blood. Christian prisoners, chained together, had painfully borne these materials for a distance of two hundred leagues, and others had for generations labored upon its walls. The spoil of many a successful campaign had contributed to enrich its interior. On all sides, golden inscriptions and trophies of conquest attested the glory of the princes of Islam and the invincible prowess of their armies. The Great Mosque is not merely an epitome of architecture, wherein are disclosed adaptations of the artistic ideas of many widely separated nations,—the manifestations of a spirit which could appropriate and combine in exquisite harmony the columns of the Roman, the capitals of the African, the arch of the Syrian, the mosaic of the Byzantine, the battlements of the Persian,—it is an eloquent testimonial to the genius which could enlist the ordinarily baneful influence of superstition in the cultivation of literature and the diffusion of knowledge. For this splendid temple played no unimportant part in the intellectual advancement of Mohammedan Spain, as well as in the civilization of barbarian Europe.

The multitudes of pilgrims and scholars who resorted to Cordova hastened, without delay, to pay their devotions at its shrine. The Arab recognized in the sweep of its arches, the graceful curves of the palm groves of Nejd and Yemen, mementos of the Desert immortalized by the conceptions of the architect, ever mindful of the life and habits of his Bedouin ancestry. The polished Syrian viewed with admiring rapture the rich stuccoes, whose complex and gorgeous patterns surpassed in beauty the brocades of Damascus and the decorations which covered the palaces of the monarchs of Asia. In the carvings of its lattices was to be traced the peculiar form of the Indian cross, a symbol whose origin is unknown to the most ancient tradition, and which appears sculptured upon the venerable altars of Ceylon and Hindustan. Even the emblem of a sect most obnoxious to Islam was appropriated, and, by a singular inconsistency, compelled to assist in the adornment of the most gorgeous mosque of the Moslem world. The cresting of the walls, originally painted scarlet, is typical of flame, and, brought from Persia, symbolized the faith of the Ghebers, the detested worshippers of fire. Thus were concentrated in this unique structure the ideas, the materials, the devices, the ornamentation of many epochs and of many races. Each visit to its hallowed precincts imparted fresh inspiration to the theologian, to the artist, to the poet, to the student, to the antiquary. The reverence it claimed as a seat of pilgrimage invested its shrine with attributes possessed by none of the famous oracles of antiquity, and shared by few of the fanes of any contemporaneous religious faith. It was, moreover, justly regarded as the peculiar creation of a people whom its erection had greatly contributed to form and amalgamate, and who were entitled to credit for the admiration which its magnificence and its beauty elicited. Every city and province of the empire had contributed to the pious undertaking. Cordova paid the army of laborers employed. Merida furnished columns and other materials, ready for the mason, from the temples and the amphitheatre which had embellished the seat of Roman power in ancient Lusitania. From the quarries of Almeria and Granada came great quantities of jasper, marble, and alabaster. From the forests of the Sierras was obtained the larch for the ceiling, whose remarkable preservation in buildings not subjected to the destructive consequences of ecclesiastical avarice attest its extraordinary exemption from the attacks of insects and the ravages of decay. The princes of Mauritania and the Byzantine vassals or allies of the khalifs, prompted by feelings of piety or friendship, bestowed upon the rising temple the most valuable relics of ancient art to be found in their dominions. A fifth of the spoils of battle—in a single instance amounting to the sum of forty-five thousand pieces of gold—was appropriated to defray the enormous expense which, notwithstanding the drafts on the treasury and the generous donations of the people, was constantly increasing. In the successive enlargements of the building demanded by the growing population, the owners of adjacent property, the purchase of which became indispensable, were rewarded for the sacrifice of their homes with unstinted generosity. Arab estimates have placed the entire cost of the Djalma—whose construction and alterations embraced, from first to last, a period of more than two centuries, under nine princes of the House of Ommeyah—at fifteen million pieces of gold. The Mosque, as completed, comprised an area of six hundred and twenty by four hundred and forty feet, running with the cardinal points of the compass. About one-third of this enclosure was occupied by a spacious court surrounded by arcades, planted with oranges, pomegranates, and palms, and refreshed with the spray of many fountains. The walls, thirty feet high on the northern side, increased in altitude with the approach to the river—the land rapidly descending in that direction—until they rose to the commanding height of seventy feet above the banks of the Guadalquivir. The roof was protected by plates of lead nearly an inch in thickness, whose sale in subsequent times yielded a magnificent sum to priestly depredators. The building, massive and imposing in its exterior, presented a strong resemblance to a fortress, a resemblance not inappropriate when the martial traditions of the religion to which it was dedicated are recalled. Immense buttresses, necessitated by the weight of the walls and the pressure of the arcades, were placed at frequent intervals, like flanking towers in the defences of a citadel. The summits of wall and tower were fringed with battlements. Access was obtained to the interior by means of twenty-one horseshoe archways, three of which opened into the court-yard, and nine on the east and west sides respectively, three, in all, being reserved for the especial use of women. These archways were decorated with terra-cotta mosaics in red and yellow, relieved by inscriptions in gold on a ground of blue and scarlet. The doors were covered with plates of burnished brass, and provided with rings and knockers of huge dimensions and curious workmanship.

No church in Christendom could offer to the eyes of the worshipper such a scene of beauty as that enjoyed by the Moslem as he passed from the thronged and dusty streets of the city into the spacious Court of the Oranges. The latter bore the fascinating and voluptuous aspect of a tropical garden. The atmosphere was fragrant with the perfume of orange, rose, and jasmine. The foliage of the palm, recalling the famous groves of Medina and transporting the pilgrim in imagination to scenes in the distant Orient, rose majestically above the smaller but not less attractive orange-trees, with their glossy leaves, golden fruit, and snowy blossoms. Exquisite flowers, arranged in beds of fantastic patterns, bloomed along the borders of the arcades. Four great basins, each a monolith, supplied the water for the ceremonial lustration enjoined by the law of Islam. From the fountains the vast throng, clad in white robes, moved silently towards the temple and into the doors, which, looking upon the court, were closed by curtains of stamped and gilded leather. Within, the eye was bewildered by the forest of columns,—more than fourteen hundred in number,—stretching far away to an apparently interminable distance. They were destitute of bases, and their capitals were entirely covered with gold. Above, tiers of double arches, in red and white, sustained the ceiling glittering with arabesques entwined with texts from the Koran. The divisions of the latter were formed by medallions oval, hexagonal, and circular, bearing a general resemblance to each other, yet widely differing in distribution of colors and details of ornamentation. The floor was composed of many-colored marble, arranged in designs of simple but pleasing character. Lattices of alabaster, carved in patterns no two of which were identical, admitted in mellowed radiance the diminished splendor of a tropical sun. At the southern extremity was the Kiblah, or point facing Mecca, towards which every devout Moslem turns five times a day in prayer. It was designated by the Mihrab, a diminutive chapel corresponding in some respects to the Holy of Holies of the synagogue, and facing the principal nave of the Mosque. Constructed by Al-Hakem II., the richness of its decoration was unparalleled, and the tracery of its design unique. Engrailed, interlacing arches of peculiar form supported the dome of the vestibule. The entrance to the Mihrab or sanctuary—a marble chamber octagonal in form, and fifteen feet in diameter as well as in height—was flanked by two similar doorways leading into apartments of smaller dimensions. Four slender columns of verde-antique and lapis-lazuli sustained the sweeping horseshoe arch of entrance. The slabs of marble which lined the Mihrab were carved and gilded. The ceiling was composed of a single block, which the skill of the sculptor had fashioned into the exact representation of a gigantic shell. In the vestibule, over portal and wall, upon spandrel and dome, sparkled elaborate and fantastic creations in Byzantine mosaic, wrought by the most cunning artificers of Constantinople. It was a condition of the treaty between Constantine and Abd-al-Rahman that the latter should be furnished with all the mosaic he required for his buildings. In a single vessel despatched from the Bosphorus, under direction of the Emperor, during the reign of Al-Hakem, were sixteen tons of this precious material.

The legends in the Cufic character, whose forms so readily lend themselves to mural decoration, were always of gold. The groundwork was of different colors,—scarlet, black, blue, green, and crimson,—disposed in harmonious combinations most agreeable to the eye. The elegant curves of the arabesques formed a charming contrast with the angular letters of the inscriptions. Composed of minute cubes of glass, scores of which were necessary to cover a square inch of surface, the patience and skill required for a work of such magnitude and delicacy can scarcely be even imagined. Years were employed in its completion, and its durability was such that, where the mosaics have escaped the destructive touch of the Christian vandal, their solidity and lustre remain to-day unimpaired, after the changes, the neglect, and the depredations of more than eleven centuries.

Within the enclosure of the Mihrab was kept the pulpit built under the direction of Al-Hakem II., and destined for the use of the sovereign, when, in the capacity of Successor of the Prophet, he addressed the multitude congregated in the Mosque. It was made of minute pieces of costly woods combined with ivory, tortoise-shell, and mother of pearl, put together with gold and silver nails. Seven years were consumed in the production of this admirable specimen of the joiner's art. The carvings with which it was covered were of the most exquisite character. Its intrinsic value was greatly enhanced by the jewels with which it was enriched, and the precious metals used in its construction. Inside of this pulpit, and enclosed in a case of cloth of gold studded with rubies and pearls, was preserved the famous Koran of the Khalif Othman, which he was reading at the time of his assassination, and whose leaves were said to have been discolored with his blood. A memento of the relentless persecution of the Ommeyades, no relic, even of the Prophet himself, was regarded by the adherents of the Abbaside and Fatimite dynasties with greater veneration than was this precious souvenir by the princes and the people of the Andalusian empire. It was at once the talisman of their security, the glory of their ritual, the emblem of imperial and theocratical power. Deposited upon a lectern of aloe wood profusely inlaid with gold, it was borne in state on Fridays to the tribune, where the customary service was read from its pages. Four men were required to carry the ponderous volume and its accessories. The cortege was preceded by the imam and his assistants, and accompanied with the pomp of lamps and incense. The magnificent processions of the Roman Catholic Church, during the period of its greatest ecclesiastical and temporal grandeur, could boast no spectacle more impressive than this ceremonial, celebrated every week in the presence of twelve thousand worshippers.

Directly in front of the Mihrab was the Maksurah, an enclosure reserved for the Khalif, the princes of the blood, and the higher ministers of the Mohammedan religion. It occupied a portion of the seven central naves, and was terminated on the south by the vestibule of the Mihrab. It measured one hundred and twelve by thirty-three feet, and was formed by a lofty screen or lattice elaborately carved, composed, for the most part, of odoriferous woods enriched with beautiful ornaments. Despite the numerous interstices with which it was provided, the interior was not visible to those outside, and its resemblance to a wall was increased by its towering height of fifty feet, as well as by the gilded battlements with which it was crowned. The pavement was of silver tiles, and the central door, destined for the passage of the Khalif, was heavily plated with gold. During his attendance at the services of the Mosque, the Commander of the Faithful was rarely seen by his subjects. From the adjoining palace he crossed the street by a covered bridge, and, traversing a secret passage contrived in the southern wall of the Mosque, entered the vestibule of the Mihrab, and thence proceeded to his post in the elevated tribune of the Maksurah. This passage contained eight doors, at each of which a sentinel was posted. These opened alternately towards the east and west, thus, in case of treachery, precluding the possibility of concert among the guards, one of whom, if faithful, could, unaided, readily defend the passage against the combined efforts of the remaining seven. The entrance of the Khalif was the occasion of a magnificent display. A silken carpet, interwoven with silver, was spread from the palace gate to the Maksurah. Black and white eunuchs in splendid costumes preceded and followed the royal party. The body-guard of the sovereign was composed of members of his family, carrying drawn scimetars, and sheathed in shining mail. These precautions were considered necessary on account of the melancholy experience of former Successors of the Prophet. The sacred character investing Omar, Othman, Ali, and Muavia had not preserved them from the assassin's dagger; and the populace of Cordova, notorious for its daring criminals and fanatics, excited well-grounded fears in the mind of a monarch whose formidable army was sometimes insufficient to restrain its revolutionary spirit, fostered by turbulent adventurers collected from every nation subject to the code of Islam. On the western side of the temple, and facing the royal palace, was the Chamber of Alms, where the charity of the Khalif was daily dispensed in accordance with the injunctions of his faith.

The interior of the Mosque, by reason of its vast extent and its comparatively low ceiling, was more or less obscure, even at noon-day, and lamps were kept constantly burning in its aisles. Two hundred and eighty chandeliers of brass and silver were suspended from its arches, the oil used in them being perfumed with costly essences. The largest of these contained fourteen hundred and fifty-four lamps, and measured thirty-eight feet in circumference. Its reflector contained thirty-six thousand pieces of silver fastened with rivets of gold. Its beauty was enhanced by the gems with which it was studded, and, by the combined effect of the mirrors, the light was increased to nine times its original intensity. During the entire month of Ramadhan the Mosque was illuminated with twenty thousand lights. An enormous taper, weighing sixty pounds, was placed in the Maksurah. Its dimensions were calculated with such accuracy that the wax was completely consumed during the last hour of the last day of the festival.

A deep and mysterious significance has always attached to the celebration of the feast of Ramadhan in the Mohammedan world, but nowhere were its rules observed with such solemnity, and its ceremonies performed with such splendor, as in the capital of Mohammedan Spain. It corresponded in many respects to the Lent of the Christian Church. From dawn to dark not a mouthful of food, not a drop of water, could pass the lips of the consistent believer. After sunset he was, in a measure, recompensed for his privations during the day. Lamps were hung from tower and minaret. The tinkle of the mandolin and the mellow notes of the lute were heard from latticed balconies. The sounds of boisterous revelry rose faintly on the midnight air from retired courtyards and the distant apartments of majestic palaces. Crowds in the most picturesque of costumes swept through the streets. Dancing-girls and story-tellers, surrounded by appreciative audiences, plied their several vocations in the squares, under the glistening foliage of lemon- and orange-trees. The Koranic prohibition of indulgence in wine was too often forgotten, and the indignation of the abstemious Moslem was frequently aroused by the sight of transgressors in every stage of intoxication. On all sides were the evidences of joy, carelessness, and festivity.

Inside the Mosque a far different scene presented itself to the eye of the delighted spectator. From the lofty gallery of the minaret,—whose centre was veiled in obscurity, but whose gilded crest glittered with the magical play of a hundred colored lanterns,—the piercing voice of the muezzin was calling the people to prayer. Through every doorway an endless living stream poured into the temple. Among the worshippers, but keeping aloof from the surging mass, were numbers of strangely muffled figures, accompanied by gigantic blacks attired in robes of silk and gold. These were the ladies of the harems, whom the liberal ideas of Andalusian society usually permitted to dispense with the veil, but which, assumed on this occasion from choice, became a convenient disguise and an invaluable aid to intrigue. The interior suggested a vision of enchantment. Myriads of lights illumined every corner of the vast edifice, rivalling in their intolerable brilliancy the blinding glare of the meridian sun. Their rays were reflected and multiplied by the gleaming walls; by the ceiling, with its broad inscriptions and its bewildering arabesques; by the metallic foliage of a thousand capitals; by the portal of the

Maksurah with its scales of polished gold. The air was heavy with the smoke of amber, aloes, and ambergris. Far away through long vistas of columns, the beautiful Mihrab, whose vitreous surface sparkled with the radiance of countless jewels of every conceivable hue, pointed out to the believer the location of the Kiblah. Following the example of the imam, visible from his lofty station in the mimbar, the innumerable multitude, as if actuated by a single impulse, raised its voice in prayer, and moved in unison through the repeated prostrations prescribed by the Mohammedan ritual. Of such a fascinating character was the sight to be witnessed during every night of the festival, in the most sumptuous temple of Islam, enriched by the munificence and the piety of the most enlightened sovereigns of the age, whose appointments surpassed, in their incredible magnificence, alike the boasted decorations of Pagan antiquity and the luxurious creations inspired by the wild imagination of the Orient; where gold and silver, where rare woods and precious gems were employed, like the commonest materials, in lavish profusion; where trophies of victory, ostentatiously displayed, reminded the zealot of the triumphs of the Faith; where the excited senses of the worshipper were soothed by the costliest odors from jewelled censers; and where, disposed in silver chandeliers and candelabras, rows upon rows of perfumed tapers diffused through the endless colonnades their lustre and their fragrance.

On the north side of the Court of the Oranges stood the stately minaret erected during the reign of Abd-al-Rahman III. A master-piece of architecture, and, in every respect, appropriate to the sumptuous building for whose use it was intended, it was universally conceded to be without a rival in the world. It was twenty-seven feet square and one hundred and eight feet high. Constructed of polished freestone brought from Africa, its sides were carved in elegant tracery, whose gilded patterns were projected upon a ground of ultramarine and vermilion. It was lighted by windows forming graceful arches, supported by diminutive columns of red and white jasper. Half of the windows had two openings, and the remainder, three, and disposed alternately amidst the maze of varied and brilliant decorative designs, they produced a charming effect. The interior contained two stairways, so contrived that a person ascending or descending either was invisible to any one upon the other. A gallery, eighty-one feet from the ground, was used by the muezzin for the duties of his sacred office. Another and a smaller structure, corresponding in style with the one upon which it was superimposed, rose to the additional height of twelve feet, and was furnished with battlements similar to those of the Mosque. Its summit was adorned with three huge balls, two of gold and one of silver, encircled by lilies of the latter metal, crowned with a pomegranate of burnished gold. Three hundred persons of all ranks—many of whom, like the servitors of the Kaaba, were eunuchs—were employed in the various offices of the Great Mosque, the menials being lodged within its walls. A guard was constantly maintained, day and night, in the vicinity of the Maksurah, under whose floor were vaults for the custody of the candlesticks and the various sacred vessels used in the ceremonies of festivals.

Such was the superb temple of Cordova, once the pride of Islam, and one of the noblest monuments of superstition and policy ever conceived by human genius or erected by human power. Its completion made possible the grand achievements of the Ommeyade dynasty, whose influence, acting indirectly upon Christian nations, greatly facilitated the emancipation of the human intellect, long confined by the galling bonds of ecclesiastical intolerance and heathen tradition. The inspiration of its architects was derived from many sources; in its plan it exhibited the conformation of the synagogue and the tabernacle; in its decoration were displayed the luxurious adornments of the Greek cathedral; its tapers and its incense recalled the Latin ceremonial, in its turn borrowed from the pompous ritual of Pagan sacrifice. Even in its present dilapidated state, the original purposes of its institution are apparent at every step; and nothing short of its entire destruction could eradicate the enthusiastic impressions excited by the first view of its singular interior, with its forest of columns, and its tarnished and mutilated vestiges of Oriental splendor. It is eminently typical of the civilization of a vanished race, whose deeds are written in something more enduring than brass or marble, and serves to indicate to posterity the sublimity of the spirit that could contrive, and the skill and resources that could execute, an undertaking of such grandeur and magnificence.

The health of Al-Hakem growing steadily worse, he made preparations to avoid, as far as possible, the evils incident to a disputed succession. He had only one son, Hischem, then fourteen years of age; but the history of his house abounded with instances of the unscrupulous ambition of royal claimants belonging to the collateral branches who had aspired to establish their pretensions by arms. Without declaring his object, a grand council of nobles, governors of provinces, generals of the army, and ministers of state was convened at Cordova. With bowed head and faltering gait, the feeble monarch ascended for the last time the steps of his throne. Through the vizier, he explained to the assembled officials the reason why he had called them together, and made the request—which was understood as a command—that all should attach their signatures to an instrument declaring

Hischem the sole heir to the crown of the khalifate. This having been done, similar documents were despatched without delay into all the provinces of the empire, to be signed by the inferior officials of the government and even by the people, in order to secure, by every practical expedient, the permanence of the dynasty and the integrity of its succession, which had at last come to be recognized as dependent upon the law of primogeniture. We shall see, in the sequel, how far these elaborate and well-contrived precautions were successful.

The few months which remained to Al-Hakem after the investiture of his son with royal power were occupied in the performance of good works. His worldly affairs and the future of his empire had been committed to the hands of others. The condition of his mind and his failing eye-sight precluded him from the enjoyments and the consolations of literature. Conscious of his increasing infirmities, and admonished daily of his approaching end, he endeavored to employ his entire time in the fulfilment of the duties of a devout Mussulman. His life had been disgraced by no excesses, disfigured by no persecutions, stained with no crimes. He had ever been distinguished for the exercise of a broad and unostentatious charity. Calumny itself could neither accuse him of fanaticism nor impute to him even the suspicion of infidelity. The most precise and orthodox interpreters of the law and the boldest freethinkers had been equally welcome at his court, and had daily encountered each other in the great libraries of his capital. The absolute intellectual liberty which there existed was, indeed, considered a reproach by ignorant Moslems of less enlightened lands, who could not understand the association with heretics and the toleration of infidels; but in Spain, where a system of universal education had been established, and was enforced as well by law as by the influence of public opinion, this inestimable privilege was thoroughly appreciated.

Thus, although the Khalif had no grave offences against morality to reproach himself with, he felt, like every truly conscientious man, that he had failed to comply with many of the injunctions of his creed. To atone, in a measure, for these deficiencies was now his only care. He dispensed great sums in charity. He diminished the taxes imposed upon the provinces of the empire by one-sixth, a measure most grateful to his subjects, and, at the same time, without detriment to the treasury, the country being at peace, and the revenues increasing under the wise and economical administration of the Vizier Moshafi. He emancipated and provided for large numbers of slaves. He directed that the rent of that quarter of the bazaar of the capital occupied by the saddlers—which was one of the perquisites of the crown—should hereafter, for all time, be set apart for the benefit of the schools maintained at public expense for the children of the poor. And, finally, knowing how much the happiness of a people is dependent on the character of their ruler, he constantly inculcated, and impressed by argument and parental authority upon the mind of his son, Prince Hischem, the duties and the grave responsibilities of a sovereign; the evils of war; the destructive consequences of ambition; the enduring benefits of peace; the necessity of a pure administration of justice; the value of continence; the pleasures to be derived from the acquisition of knowledge; the consolations arising from the observance of the precepts of virtue, and the practice of an enlightened morality.

At last, this great monarch, whose titles to distinction are derived from far more noble sources than those whence emanates the fame attaching to the sanguinary achievements of the conqueror, was gathered to his fathers. His son, whose gentle disposition inspired the hope that he would profit by the wise counsels and the pious example he had enjoyed, recited the burial-service, and the body of Al-Hakem was committed to the sepulchre. The bier was followed by a mighty concourse, whose tears and lamentations manifested their grief, and whose apprehensions of impending misfortune were betrayed by the cry, "Our Father is dead, and with him dies the sword of Islam, the support of the weak and the terror of the proud!"

The prominent features of the character of Al-Hakem were his love of learning, his profuse but always judicious liberality, and his profound reverence for the doctrines of the Koran and the laws of the empire. The few military operations he was called upon to direct showed no want of vigor, and suggested that in a less peaceful age he might have obtained the laurels of a successful general. His devotion to literature amounted to a passion. No monarch of whom history makes mention has equalled him in the extent of his knowledge or the number and diversity of his literary accomplishments. In every country of the world, in the foci of civilization, in the great capitals and commercial emporiums of the East, at Bagdad, Cairo, Damascus, Alexandria, Constantinople, his agents were stationed to secure books for his libraries. No price was too extravagant to pay, no difficulty was too arduous to surmount, in the acquisition of a work whose character made it a desirable addition to the vast collection of the palace of Cordova. The rarity of a volume was a special inducement to its purchase. Where the owner refused to part with a manuscript, he was, as a rule, easily prevailed upon to allow it to be copied, and his courtesy was always munificently rewarded. In the extensive libraries of the princes of the Orient, whose collections, however valuable, could not vie with the superb one of Al-Hakem, were constantly occupied the expert scribes and copyists of that accomplished, untiring monarch; investigators whose labors were never terminated, whose pens were never idle. A premium was offered to every writer of note whose productions should be first submitted to the Khalif, and the knowledge of this fact often procured for him the inspection of manuscripts long before they were made public in the country where they were composed. The emulation and the aspirations of distinguished authors caused their works to be transmitted to Cordova from the most distant lands, from Al-Maghreb, Egypt, Byzantium, Syria, and Persia, and the reward for a composition of unusual merit not infrequently reached the enormous figure of a thousand pieces of gold.

Under the influence of such potent agencies, it is not remarkable that great popularity was communicated to the study of every branch of human knowledge. Treatises replete with the stores of ancient wisdom were brought forth from dusty corners where they had lain neglected for centuries; the sages of Greece were translated into Arabic; and the philosophy of Aristotle and the problems of Euclid were publicly expounded for the benefit of the multitude. In a society where intellectual pre-eminence was a certain passport to official distinction, the study of letters soon became not only a popular and absorbing pursuit, but one of the most desirable of professions. The accumulation of books was the first employment of an aspirant to public consideration and political fame. In the house of almost every prosperous citizen a collection of volumes, not exhibited to display the wealth or pedantry of the owner, but with whose contents he was more or less familiar, was preserved. For the benefit of those whose means were too limited for the possession of such luxuries, as well as to afford every facility for the promotion of intelligence and the advancement of science, public libraries were founded in all the great cities of the Peninsula. With the growing demand for manuscripts, their value not only increased in the markets of the world, but, through the enormous prices they commanded, literary industry was stimulated to their search and reproduction. It was a well-known fact that no gift was so acceptable to the Khalif as a rare manuscript, or the first copy of a new work by an author of established reputation. The library of Al-Hakem II. was undoubtedly the greatest repository of learning which had up to that time existed in Europe. As a significant token of the estimation in which its volumes were held, the appointments and furniture of the building where they were deposited exhibited all the magnificence of a palace. The floor was of rare and costly marble, the walls and ceiling of alabaster and mosaic, the columns of jasper and verde-antique. The cases were of polished woods, some selected for their rarity, others for the delightful fragrance they exhaled. Inscriptions in characters of gold indicated the contents of the shelves, or inspired the student, by the repetition of the maxims of famous writers, to emulate the example of the wise and virtuous scholars of antiquity. The manuscripts in time became so numerous that the halls of the library, extensive as they were, could not contain them. In the scriptorium an army of binders and calligraphists was employed, and the finest books were gilded and illuminated with a taste and elegance that have never been equalled. The number of volumes in the collection of the Khalif is variously stated at from four hundred thousand to six hundred thousand. Forty-four volumes were required for the catalogue alone. With the contents of most of these works Al-Hakem is said to have been familiar, and, indeed, many of them were enriched with notes and comments written by his own hand. The title-page of each volume bore not only the name of the author but also his genealogy, as well as the dates of his birth and his death, all collected and preserved by the indefatigable industry of the royal scholar. His prodigious memory; his powers of acquisition; his critical acumen; his talents for composition; and the capacity which could abstract from the administration of the public affairs of a great monarchy sufficient time for literary undertakings that, under ordinary circumstances, could hardly be accomplished in a lifetime of constant study, are marvellous and incredible. For Al-Hakem was an historian of approved merit, as well as an impartial critic and a voluminous commentator. He wrote a history of Spain, now unhappily lost, which was considered a high authority in its time, and whose reputation was universally admitted to be independent of the prestige which it would naturally derive from the name and rank of the author. Such was his erudition that in knowledge on obscure points of genealogy and biography he was without a rival, even in the learned court of Cordova; and his fund of historical information was so profound, and his judgment so accurate, that his opinions were respected and unquestioned by the most accomplished scholars of the Mohammedan world. As may be conjectured, a prodigious impulse was imparted to education by this extraordinary patronage of letters. The accumulated wisdom of Africa, Asia, and Europe was to be found at Cordova. Reports of the munificence of Al-Hakem, and the fame of his splendid court, where literary attainments were a recommendation to royal favor, had been transmitted along the highways of commerce to the most isolated quarters of the globe. It was the ambition of every scholar to complete his studies in a society which offered such unrivalled advantages. A multitude of students of every nationality constantly thronged the streets of the capital. Education was reduced to a system, whose regulations were enforced with military precision. To invest the cause of instruction with additional prestige, the influence of royalty was invoked, and Al-Mondhir, the brother of the Khalif, was charged with the general supervision of the institutions of learning. The charity of Al-Hakem had founded at Cordova no less than twenty-seven schools, where the children of the poor received an education not inferior in thoroughness to that conferred by the best colleges of the empire.

The intellectual progress of the nation was greatly assisted by the freedom of thought which was universally prevalent. The study of philosophy was encouraged, and the promulgation of the most heretical opinions was neither prohibited by public sentiment, nor allowed to be interfered with by the fanaticism of the orthodox sects. By the incessant collision of opinions, by the comparison of authorities, and by the examination of antagonistic doctrines a general spirit of inquiry sprang up; and, in consequence of its dissemination, even the professors of the University were not wrongfully suspected of a leaning towards atheism.

The efforts of Al-Hakem had been early directed to the reformation of manners, an invidious task which might well exhaust the resolution and tact of the most politic and courageous sovereign. The example of the Orient, the possession of wealth, and the influence of luxury had introduced and promoted the demoralizing vice of drunkenness. The wines of Andalusia were then, as now, famous for their palatable as well as for their exhilarating qualities. The country was covered with vineyards, and the products of the winepress formed no inconsiderable item of the commercial statistics of the Peninsula. Debauchery, at first carried on in secret, had grown bold with the open countenance of high officials and the increasing impunity with which it was practised; and it was hinted that even the ministers of religion did not hesitate to indulge in a vice so severely reprobated by the Koran. The prohibited beverages were not confined to wines, for inebriating liquors distilled from figs, dates, and other fruits were also consumed in large quantities. This pernicious habit was not confined to the wealthier class, but was almost universal; and the scenes of revelry, in which persons of both sexes participated at banquets and other festivities, rivalled, if they did not surpass, the scandalous orgies which had in the day of their splendor and their infamy disgraced the court and capital of Damascus. The Moslem casuists attempted to excuse these breaches of the law by alleging that the use of wine was necessary to the soldier, as it inspired him with courage and increased his powers of endurance, and that this indulgence should be at least conceded to those who habitually exposed themselves to the weapons of the enemy. Such sophistry, however, failed to impose upon the discerning mind of Al-Hakem. Determined to remove, if possible, the means of intoxication, he issued a peremptory order that all the vines in the Peninsula should be torn up and destroyed. His counsellors, however, having represented that such a sweeping measure would be productive of great financial loss and consequent suffering, and that intoxicating beverages could be, and were, even then, made from other fruits, he consented to withdraw the order, which had already caused wide-spread alarm among his subjects. But his sense of duty did not permit him to leave the evil unchecked. The imams were directed to declare from the pulpits of the mosques that the use of wine was forbidden at all social assemblies and public festivities; and the kadis were especially admonished that the penalties prescribed by the law for drunkenness must be enforced, regardless of the wealth, rank, or official station of the offender. The vice was, however, too deeply rooted to be abolished by the denunciations of theologians or the impotent threats of magistrates, themselves suspected of secret participation in the offences they affected publicly to condemn. The society of Cordova, and with it that of the entire khalifate, in a minor degree, had, in fact, become thoroughly epicurean. The philosopher, while observing a decent reverence for the national religion whose rites he openly practised in the character of a good citizen and privately ridiculed in the company of his friends, was deeply tinctured with the ancient pantheistic doctrines of India. Even the populace had ceased to exhibit the fanaticism which is the inseparable companion of ignorance. The system of universal education had gradually and insensibly removed many of those prejudices on whose perpetuity depend the importance and the power of the ministers of superstition. The example of their superiors was not lost on the multitude. The attendance at the mosques was not perceptibly diminished, but it became rather a matter of custom than an observance dictated by conscientious belief and a sense of religious duty. A skepticism pervaded the masses which surprised and alarmed the devout pilgrim from a far-distant country who visited the shrine of Cordova, in his eyes, second in holiness only to the temple of Mecca. Enjoyment of the present, indifference to the future, were the principles which guided the conduct and influenced the lives of the pleasure-loving subjects of Al-Hakem. Under such circumstances, the correction of public immorality, and the repression of a popular and prevalent vice was a difficult, if not a hopeless, undertaking. The edict of the Khalif against drunkenness was publicly observed and secretly disregarded. The epicurean tendency of the age was too general and too well established to be seriously affected by the proclamations or the example of princes.

In the prosecution of enterprises of public improvement and general utility, Al-Hakem exhibited no less taste and spirit than the most renowned of his predecessors. The largest cities and the most sequestered hamlets of the empire alike acknowledged the benefits of his discriminating liberality. He repaired the highways; furnished them with fountains at convenient intervals; and, in obedience to the law of the Koran, which inculcates the duties of hospitality, established, at the end of each day's journey, a caravansary for the entertainment of travellers. Schools, almshouses, hospitals, rose in every town, a great portion of the funds required for the construction and endowment of these institutions being derived from the private purse of the Khalif. His devotion and family pride caused him to emulate the example of his ancestors by making additions to the Great Mosque of the capital. He largely increased the capacity of the building. He erected the Maksurah, where the Commander of the Faithful could enter, unperceived by the congregation, and perform his devotions apart from the other worshippers, in accordance with that practice of Oriental seclusion which from motives of prudence or mystery had, for three generations, been adopted by the Ommeyades of Spain. Before the reign of Al-Hakem, the basin where every devout Mussulman performed the ablution, symbolical of purification, incumbent on him before entering the Mosque, was small and inadequate to the necessities of the multitudes that daily frequented the second in renown and sanctity of the fanes of Islam. This receptacle was rude and primitive; the water frequently became stagnant; and the supply was, from time to time, renewed from a neighboring well by means of vessels borne by beasts of burden. The inconvenience and incongruity of this arrangement, amidst all the splendors that surrounded it, forcibly impressed itself upon the mind of the Khalif. At vast expense and with infinite labor, he caused four basins of stone to be constructed at the angles of the court of the Mosque, two for the use of men and two for the use of women. In the centre was a great monolithic reservoir of marble, from which rose a fountain that diffused its refreshing spray over the tropical vegetation with which the court was adorned. The blocks for these basins were quarried in the mountains, miles from Cordova, and the largest required the power of seventy oxen and an army of laborers to transport it to its destination. This gigantic undertaking consumed twelve days. An abundant supply of water was conveyed from the springs and rivulets of the sierra through the aqueduct, and the overflow passed by means of pipes into immense cisterns under the pavement of the court, available in case of siege and an ever-ready protection against fire. The aqueduct also supplied many other fountains throughout the city, which were increased in number and convenience by the provident care of the Khalif. The hydraulic works of Al-Hakem are almost intact to-day, after the vicissitudes of many eventful ages and the constant wear of more than nine hundred years. The marble reservoirs, where were once performed the lustrations of Moslem zealots from every land, now furnish with water the populace of Christian Cordova, whose squalid and repulsive appearance, whose brutal physical characteristics, whose profound ignorance of the history of the cleanly, intellectual, and polished race to which these splendid memorials of art and industry are to be ascribed, offer striking evidence of the instability of the highest civilization and of the constant tendency of man to retrograde to the condition of the savage; of his incapacity to appreciate or profit by the experience and the wisdom of the conquered when the latter belong to another creed or another sect; and of the stupendous power for evil that can be exerted by a hierarchy whose established policy is founded on the systematic debasement of the intellectual faculties of its slaves.

A pleasing story is related of Al-Hakem which strikingly illustrates his equanimity and his genial manners as well as that reverence for learning and its professors which was characteristic both of the man and the monarch. The imperious demands of despotic power, as we are accustomed to regard them, admit of no hesitation or compromise in their obedience. Yet such was the mild and forbearing disposition of this great sovereign that his subjects could venture, on occasions that seemed to justify it, to postpone for their own convenience compliance with orders that were peremptory. While the faqui Abu-Ibrahim, one of the greatest of the authorities on Mohammedan law whose talents adorned the University of Cordova, was lecturing one day to a large class of students in one of the mosques, he received, through a eunuch, a summons from the Khalif to attend him instantly at the palace.

"I hear with profound respect the order of the Commander of the Faithful," replied Abu-Ibrahim. "Return to him, and say that thou hast found me in the House of God, surrounded by my pupils, whom I am instructing in the traditions relating to the Prophet. Tell him that the moment I have finished my lecture on this holy subject, by which my audience will fail to profit if I am interrupted, I will repair to him." The eunuch, confounded by this reply, returned to the palace, and reported the result of the interview. In a short time he came back, and addressed Abu-Ibrahim as follows: "O Faqui, I have delivered thy answer to the Sultan, who applauds thy piety and appreciates the importance of the labors thou art daily performing for the benefit of our holy religion; he will await thy pleasure, and has directed me to remain until thy lecture is finished, that I may escort thee to his presence." Not only did the complaisance of Al-Hakem, on this occasion as on many others, yield to the claims of learning, but it was also indulgent to the age and weakness of his friend. He caused the gate which was nearest the palace to be opened to accommodate the venerable professor, who walked with difficulty and whose infirmities prevented him from mounting on horseback; and when he arrived at the entrance he found a great number of officials and domestics assembled to do him honor, and waiting to conduct him, with the ceremony due to his reputation and the esteem in which he was held by his royal master, into the hall of audience. Thus could the placid and magnanimous nature of Al-Hakem subordinate the prerogatives of royalty to the demands of knowledge, and sacrifice for the benefit of the votaries of science that implicit obedience whose neglect is an evidence of treason, and whose instantaneous observance is one of the inseparable rights of arbitrary power. His greatness even rose superior to the paltry prejudices of rank and the requirements of custom; the intimacy in which he lived with the learned, the respectful familiarity which he encouraged from his favorites, offer a surprising contrast to the tyranny and impatience usually associated with the possession of despotic authority.

There have existed few examples of a ruler so perfectly identified with the spirit of his age and the genius of his people as was Al-Hakem, whose name most appropriately signifies The Wise. Nature had not bestowed upon him the consummate talents for organization, and the prophetic sagacity with which she had gifted the founder of his dynasty, Abd-al-Rahman I. He did not possess either the political tact or the military capacity of Abd-al-Rahman III.

But in all the substantial acquirements of useful knowledge; in the appreciation of the works of genius, and the disposition to reward them; in the encouragement of every art which promotes happiness and alleviates suffering; in the practice of those virtues which reflect dignity on a subject and shine with still greater lustre when included in the attributes of royalty, he was certainly without a rival among all the Spanish Mohammedan princes. He was the worthy representative of the advanced culture, the scientific attainments, the poesy and the art of Hispano-Arab civilization, as contrasted with the intellectual darkness, the disgusting immorality, the revolting filth, the abject superstition, which characterized the contemporaneous society of Europe. His tireless industry and prodigious erudition were the marvel of his time. His devotion to literature was imitated by his subjects, who embraced with enthusiasm pursuits which both diminished the privations of the poor and contributed to the enjoyment of the favorites of fortune. The highest and most lucrative positions were the rewards of those who had attained to distinguished eminence in literary pursuits, without regard to their political antecedents, their nationality, or their ancestry.

The example of the Khalif, who often, with his own hands, cultivated his gardens, was followed by the kadis, the walis, the muftis, the nobles of the empire. He utilized to the utmost the natural resources of the Peninsula. Agriculture was brought to such excellence as seemed to make any further improvement impossible. The ships of Cadiz, Seville, Almeria, and Valencia boldly traversed the most dangerous seas. The merino sheep, whose migrations over the plains of Estremadura and Castile were made subject to laws which have been adopted by and are still in force among the Spaniards, amounted to millions. Valuable deposits of ore were opened and developed for the benefit of commerce and the arts. In short, the reign of Al-Hakem represents the golden age of Moslem history,—an age that with singular felicity had appropriated the wisdom and the experience of antiquity; whose wonderful progress in every branch of industry, in every department of knowledge, was the admiration of all nations, Christian and infidel; and whose inspiring genius was, in reality, the last, as he was the most accomplished, of a famous race of kings.

CHAPTER XIV

REIGN OF HISCHEM II.

976–1012

Origin of Ibn-abi-Amir-Al-Mansur—The Scene in the Garden—Genius and Attainments of the Youthful Statesman—His Sudden Rise to Power—Influence of the Eunuchs—Their Conspiracy Detected—Ibn-abi-Amir aspires to Supreme Authority—He is appointed Hajib—Ruin of his Rivals—Reorganization of the Civil and Military Service—Systematic Degradation of Hischem—The Palace of Zahira—The Hajib becomes Master of the Empire—Successful Wars with the Christians—Disturbances in Africa—Destruction of Leon—Sack of Santiago—Death of Al-Mansur—His Great Services to the State—His Unbroken Series of Military Triumphs—Al-Modhaffer—Abd-al-Rahman—Mohammed—Suleyman—Disappearance of Hischem—Rapid Disintegration of the Empire.

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the accession of Hischem II. a gigantic and ominous figure, like a portentous spectre, at once the impersonation of glory and the harbinger of ruin, appears upon the theatre of action in the Peninsula. Under the two preceding sovereigns the Moslem Empire of the West had made unparalleled advances in useful knowledge, in commercial prosperity, in all the arts which raise nations to the most exalted rank in the scale of civilization. Peace reigned everywhere within its borders. The tendency to sedition, which had so long obstructed its prosperity and depleted its population, had been vigorously and successfully repressed. Justice, untainted with even the suspicion of corruption, and which was no respecter of persons, was dispensed by its tribunals. Its system of education and its results were the wonder of the age. The achievements of its learned men, who were scattered over Europe, had caused them to incur the suspicion of, and, in some instances, even to endure the penalties attaching to the profession and the practice of magic. And yet, with all its greatness and all its fame, the khalifate was destined, under the administration of the phantom monarch Hischem II. —the last of his dynasty—to attain to a still higher position among the nations of the earth. This pre-eminent distinction; the unbroken triumph of more than fifty campaigns; the humiliation of its enemies in their formerly impregnable strongholds; the desecration and plunder of their most sacred shrines; the devastation and impoverishment of their territory; their regular payment of tribute and acknowledgment of vassalage,—all of these results are to be attributed to the talents of the hajib, Al-Mansur, the most consummate political and military genius that ever guided the destinies of any portion of the vast and opulent empire conquered and ruled by the sectaries of Mohammed.

Among the adventurers who followed the banner of Tarik at the time of the Conquest was Abd-al-Melik, an Arab descended from a noble family of Yemen, whom political entanglements and financial reverses had compelled to assume the hazardous but attractive calling of a soldier of fortune. The scarcity of men of intelligence and integrity in an army of barbarians led to the appointment of the illustrious exile to the command of a division. In this capacity he occupied the ancient town of Carteya, the first fortified place taken by the invaders. After participating in the campaigns of Tarik and Musa, Abd-al-Melik retired to the castle of Torrox on the Guadiaro, which had fallen to his share in the general distribution of the confiscated lands of the Visigothic monarchy. Although not belonging to the Koreishite aristocracy, his family was distinguished by its former services to the state as well as by its social position and scholastic acquirements. The great-grandson of Abd-al-Melik had been the hajib of the Emir Mohammed, who loaded him with wealth and honors. Many of his descendants contracted matrimonial alliances with the daughters of great physicians, theologians, statesmen. Others filled with credit high employments at court and in the judiciary. But, with the exception of the founder of the house, none had embraced that martial profession from whence it originally derived its eminence. The representative of this family, at the commencement of the reign of Al-Hakem II., was Mohammed-Ibn-abi-Amir, a student of law in the University of Cordova.

It was but a few days after the death of Abd-al-Rahman III. that a group of students, five in number, were seated in a garden belonging to one of the houses of public entertainment which abounded in the suburbs of the great Moslem capital. Darkness had fallen, and the reflection from the myriads of lights, distributed for miles around, diffused its tempered glow over the innumerable palms and tropical plants which adorned the streets and public parks, whose sombre foliage was further brightened by many bronze lamps of curious design, suspended here and there from the branches. The fragrance of flowers filled the air. The balmy softness of the Andalusian climate exerted its voluptuous influence; the perfumed breeze brought to the drowsy ear the confused murmur of the distant city, about to rest from the labors of the day, and the broken notes of a plaintive song, to which some anxious lover under a neighboring balcony was keeping an accompaniment with the lute. Upon the table were the fragments of a repast, and an empty flagon which had contained the amber wine of Jerez, whose condition showed that the revellers viewed with scant reverence the menacing injunctions of the Prophet. The conversation of four of the party was lively and boisterous; the fifth, however, plunged in an absorbing reverie, had, for some time, preserved a gloomy and unbroken silence. "What ails thee, O Ibn-abi-Amir?" at length exclaimed one of his companions; "thou art as pensive as a faqui and as silent as a camel that treads the sand-drifts of the Desert; hast thou perchance lost thy mistress?"

"I have long had a presentiment, O Mohammed, that one day I should rule this land; let each of you now declare what public employment he most desires, and I pledge my word that when I rise to power it shall be conferred upon him," responded the taciturn student.

A roar of laughter greeted this unexpected reply.

"Ah!" said one of the merry collegians, "these figs are delicious, and I should be pleased to live in Malaga, where they grow; for my part I choose to be governor of that province."

Another exclaimed, "I have never tasted anything as good as these cakes. I beg you to appoint me inspector of markets, for then I shall be surfeited with delicacies, without the expenditure of a single dirhem."

Another said, "I am enchanted with this magnificent city; whose shrine is the glory of Islam; whose suburbs are inferior only to the gardens of Paradise; whose wealth surpasses all the treasures of the Orient; whose palaces are the wonder of the world. I prefer, above all other offices, the prefecture of Cordova."

The fourth student remained sullen and silent.

"O Abdallah!" said one of his companions, "why dost thou not profit by the generosity of the future ruler of Andaluz?"

Abdallah rose, and, seizing Ibn-abi-Amir by the beard, exclaimed, in a voice choked with indignation and rage, "Wretched boaster! thy insolent presumption exceeds that of Iblis himself,—thou the ruler of Andaluz! Let the first act of thy authority be to have me stripped naked, smeared with honey that the bees and flies may sting me, placed upon a donkey with my face to his tail, and paraded in this condition through the streets of the capital. This is the favor that I demand of thee, who with thy insufferable conceit and arrogance doth insult the majesty of the khalifate, and the honor and dignity of the Successors of the Prophet of God!"

Releasing himself with some difficulty, and stifling, as best he could, his resentment at the most outrageous affront that could be offered to a Mussulman, Ibn-abi-Amir calmly replied, " The time will come when you will all have cause to remember this day. I shall not forget my promise, and each of you shall have his request granted, according to the literal terms in which he has preferred it."

Such was the self-confidence of Ibn-abi-Amir, who, while a poor and obscure youth, almost unknown amidst the thousands of students in attendance at the University of Cordova, yet animated by the inspiration of genius and conscious of his capacity for great undertakings, could thus indulge in seemingly extravagant dreams of empire. But with all this apparent presumption his was no common character. He united in a remarkable degree all the qualities which conduct men to political eminence. Bold even to the verge of audacity; energetic, persevering, and hopeful under the most discouraging circumstances; inexhaustible in resource; absolutely indifferent as to the morality of the means employed to attain an end so long as its expediency was established; a grateful friend and an implacable enemy; an adroit negotiator; a born commander; almost from boyhood he seemed to have employed his extraordinary abilities in the accomplishment of the lofty design which was the cherished object of his unscrupulous ambition. His features were regular, his conversation agreeable, his manners captivating to a degree that excited admiration in a society whose politeness was proverbial, and the stately etiquette of whose court was not excelled by that of any country or of any age. His knowledge of human nature was so unerring that it almost seemed the result of inspiration. No one could resist the fascinating influence that invested his presence. No one could withstand the effects of his resentment. And yet, despite his fiery nature, the profound policy which guided all his actions enabled him to restrain his anger and control his passions until the time for vengeance had come. He was an accomplished scholar, especially well versed in jurisprudence, and had early familiarized himself with the stirring annals of Islam; with the arduous struggles of its Founder; with the sufferings of its martyrs; with its victories and its disasters; with the wonderful progress of its civilization; with the martial achievements of its heroes. He knew by heart the story of the great captains and statesmen, many of whom, though born in an obscure station like himself, had made the Moslem cause illustrious under the dynasties of the East and West. Thus, gifted with every talent that nature could bestow; his faculties strengthened and developed by the advantages derived from a thorough mental training; his being dominated by an iron will whose power was directed to the realization of a project which for the time absorbed every other aspiration, the unknown and penniless adventurer prepared to push his fortunes.

After his education was completed, he managed to obtain a precarious livelihood in the capacity of a public writer who drew up petitions to be presented to the Khalif. His skill in chirography, and his knowledge of jurisprudence, obtained for him, in a short time, the place of under-secretary in the supreme tribunal of Cordova. But the kadi, a magistrate of strict integrity and a man of reserved disposition and unsociable manners, soon contracted a prejudice against his gay and versatile subordinate, and while he could not deny his extraordinary abilities, his dignity was shocked by his habitual levity. So he applied to the vizier Moshafi to give his employee some other appointment. The vizier, knowing that Al-Hakem was about to select a steward for the estate of Prince Hischem, suggested the name of Ibn-abi-Amir. The Khalif was willing, but the appointment was, in reality, vested in the favorite sultana, Aurora. The latter was a Christian by birth and a woman of great beauty, of avaricious disposition, of lax morals, and of a fiery temper. She enjoys the rare and doubtful distinction of being the only member of her sex who, during the sway of the Ommeyade dynasty, exercised an influence over the political destinies of her country. Her position as mother of the heir apparent—the only surviving son of Al-Hakem—had given her an unbounded ascendant over the mind of her husband, which she did not hesitate to abuse for her own personal benefit. There were many candidates for the coveted office, whose dignity and emoluments, important as they were, yet bore no proportion to the secret power wielded by the incumbent and the opportunities it afforded for elevation to the highest employments of the court.

Once established in a position where he could thoroughly avail himself of his talents, Ibn-abi-Amir soon rose to distinction. He found favor in the eyes of the Sultana Aurora, who appointed him steward of her household. Through her influence—all powerful with the Khalif—seven months after his introduction by the vizier Moshafi and before he had attained his twenty-seventh year, he was advanced to the responsible office of Superintendent of the Mint, which included many of the functions of a minister of finance. The keen observation of the young official soon disclosed to his penetrating mind the rare facilities for pecuniary aggrandizement and political promotion his place afforded to a man of tireless energy, unscrupulous character, and boundless aspirations. His duties brought him daily into intimate relations with the most powerful dignitaries of the empire. Great sums of money were at his disposal. The implicit confidence reposed in him, and the high favor he enjoyed at court, rendered it improbable that any inspection of his accounts would be ordered without timely warning, and an opportunity afforded to correct any embarrassing deficit. The regular habits of his life, severe almost to austerity; his knowledge of affairs; the inspiration of his genius which seemed to solve, without an effort, formidable problems of political economy and finance which defied the capacity and industry of others, peculiarly fitted him for the important post he occupied. While strictly observant of his responsibilities, every circumstance of his surroundings, every suggestion of his commanding intellect, were made subservient to the purposes of his ambition. By the exquisite courtesy of his manners and the deference he displayed towards his superiors, he conciliated the proud and exclusive nobility, who at first looked with marked disapproval upon the rapid elevation of the aspiring young statesman. The lower classes were charmed by his condescension, by his generosity, by his affability, by the tact that never forgot the claims of old acquaintance, by the gratitude that never failed to acknowledge the obligations of ancient friendship. The treasures of the state were used, without stint or scruple, to increase or to strengthen the following of the Superintendent of the Mint. No one in distress applied to him without relief. The fame of his public benefactions spread even to the borders of the khalifate. Thus, by the improvement of every opportunity, and by the judicious employment of the unlimited means at his disposal, Ibn-abi-Amir organized and controlled a large and growing party of adherents, whose loyalty to his person and his interests was in many instances even stronger than the devotion which they entertained towards their lawful sovereign.

It was not, however, through his influence with the nobility, nor from his popularity with the masses, that Ibn-abi-Amir derived his most sanguine hopes of success. His personal attractions had captivated the susceptible Sultana, who, blessed with an unsuspicious and complacent husband, scarcely deigned to conceal her admiration for her handsome *protégé*. An intimacy was established between them, whose continuance seems strangely incompatible with the jealous espionage of an Oriental court, and which furnished an inexhaustible fund of raillery for the sarcastic and anonymous poets of the capital. Every whim of the fair Aurora was gratified by her devoted steward. Her wishes were often anticipated. The silence of the occupants and the slaves of the harem was procured and retained by the distribution of costly gifts. The princess herself was the beneficiary of the most prodigal munificence. On one occasion, Ibn-abi-Amir caused to be constructed for her a miniature palace of massy silver. Every detail of and appendage to a royal dwelling was reproduced in this expensive and ingenious toy. The eunuchs, the guards, the attendants, in their appropriate garb, were represented by tiny statuettes. The fountains were supplied with delicate perfumes instead of water. The gorgeous ornamentations of an alcazar were delineated with marvellous fidelity and beauty. This magnificent present excited the wonder of the populace, when, supported upon the shoulders of a score of slaves, it was borne through the streets to the palace and laid at the feet of the delighted Aurora. But this crowning exhibition of extravagance came near being attended with serious consequences. The promotion of Ibn-abi-Amir, despite his tact and liberality, which disarmed the envy and malice of the courtiers, had raised up against him powerful and resolute enemies. The latter openly accused the Superintendent of the Mint of embezzlement of the public funds. With the summary proceedings characteristic of an arbitrary government, Ibn-abi-Amir was cited at once before the Divan, and ordered to produce his books and all the treasure in his possession. The wary minister was equal to the emergency. A thorough accountant, he knew at the close of each day the exact amount of the deficit which he was conscious must, some time or other, be made good. He applied to the vizier, Ibn-Hodair, who was indebted to him for numerous favors, for a temporary loan of several thousand pieces of gold. The vizier was only too happy to oblige his friend; the accuracy of the accounts was verified; the sum for which the Superintendent of the Mint was responsible was found to be intact; and those who had impeached the official integrity of the minister were branded with the obloquy which attaches to the unsuccessful persecution of an honest and capable public servant.

The credit of Ibn-abi-Amir now rose higher than ever. His success in extricating himself from the snare which had been so artfully laid for him extorted the unwilling praise of his adversaries. To make amends for the apparent injustice he had done the favorite by impugning his honesty, Al-Hakem conferred upon him new and repeated marks of his confidence. He became, in succession, trustee of intestate estates, Kadi of Seville, and Chief of Police of Cordova. A still greater dignity was soon afterwards tendered him, and one whose importance in advancing his interests he was not slow to appreciate.

The enormous expenditures of Ghalib in Mauritania, which he had represented as necessary to detach the Berber chieftains from the standard of Ibn-Kenun, had aroused the suspicions of the Khalif. The interests of the government in Africa demanded the presence of an able financier, whose prudence and authority might curb the extravagance or stop the peculations of the generals who were squandering the revenues of the empire. The reputation of Ibn-abi-Amir designated him as the most available personage to discharge the duties of this important but invidious employment. He was accordingly appointed kadi of the entire province of Mauritania and invested with extraordinary powers. His control over the finances of the civil and military administrations was unlimited and supreme. He was directed to supervise all expenditures and to rigidly scrutinize all accounts. Such was the confidence reposed in his judgment, and the high opinion entertained of his talents by the Khalif, that, although he was entirely destitute of military training or experience, the veteran generals of the African army were ordered to undertake no operations without previous consultation with the Kadi of Mauritania. The difficulties attending the administration of a charge of this character and responsibility were such as would have utterly baffled a less dexterous and politic statesman than Ibn-abi-Amir. By the army he was regarded as an ignorant upstart, by the civil officials as a spy and informer. But his rare adroitness and the irresistible fascination of his manners soon removed these prejudices. Without neglecting the interests of his master, he succeeded in acquiring the esteem of the officers and the respect of the soldiery. He astonished the former by his opportune suggestions concerning an art with the application of whose rules he had no practical acquaintance. He engaged in the conversation, participated in the amusements, and shared the privations of the latter. His tenacious memory, which recalled without effort the name of every individual he had once seen, aided materially to the increase and the preservation of his personal popularity. With a view to future contingencies, the sagacious minister neglected no occasion to secure the good will of the Berber chieftains. He shared their rude but generous hospitality. He flattered their ridiculous pretensions, and indulged their hereditary prejudices. He impressed them with his power by an imposing display of pomp and magnificence. The presents which he lavished upon them were reported and exaggerated with barbarian hyperbole in every camp of the Desert. Such was the affection with which he came to be regarded by the ferocious bandits of Mauritania that it almost supplanted the semireligious respect claimed and exacted by their sheiks, who exercised the functions of a precarious magistracy, based rather upon temporary and conditional submission than established by the absolute and permanent renunciation of a part of the natural rights of the governed.

After the return of Ibn-abi-Amir in the train of the victorious Ghalib, he assumed a state corresponding with his rank and the public estimation in which he was held. His palace at Rusafah, one of the most charming suburbs of Cordova, rivalled the abodes of royalty in elegance and splendor. The most exquisite decorations embellished its walls. Its extensive gardens exhibited all the luxuriance and beauty of the tropics. The groves swarmed with nightingales and birds of gorgeous plumage. Innumerable fountains diffused on every side their welcome and refreshing spray. Multitudes of slaves, arrayed in brilliant robes of silk, thronged the corridors. In the great marble dining-hall a table was constantly laid for the benefit of all who desired to partake of the hospitality of the owner. The influence and popularity of the latter were daily manifested by the throng of petitioners who, from dawn to sunset, obstructed the gates of the palace. Of all this crowd, no suppliant, however humble, was suffered to depart without a courteous and attentive hearing. The constant accumulation of business, and the demands of the various official employments of the minister, required the services of a great number of clerks and secretaries. These offices, while no sinecures, were eagerly solicited by youths connected with the most respectable families of Cordova, who esteemed it an honor to perfect their political education under so accomplished a master, and who were not slow to detect that through his service lay the path to future power and distinction. The popularity of Ibn-abi-Amir, who, in addition to his other official functions, had recently assumed those of the steward of the palace, was at its height when Al-Hakem died; and the minister, with the Vizier Moshafi, who had jointly been invested with that trust by the Khalif, prepared to establish the regency and assume control of the empire.

The apprehensions entertained by Al-Hakem of the public disapprobation attending the accession of a minor were speedily realized. The gradual divergence from the ancient constitution of the Arabs, which recognized only the claims of princes of mature age and established reputation, was viewed with suspicion and dislike by every class of the people. The merely factitious title of hereditary descent was not sufficient, in their eyes, to compensate for the dangers liable to result from want of experience and administrative ability. The investiture of an infant with regal authority was uniformly regarded by the superstitious as an evil omen, which portended the destruction of the monarchy. The case was, moreover, without precedent in the history of the khalifate, for the wise sovereigns of the House of Ommeyah had invariably, under similar circumstances, subordinated paternal fondness to the paramount interests of the state. In this instance, the expediency of an opposite course was obvious, for the brothers of Al-Hakem were universally recognized as thoroughly competent to discharge with credit the high and responsible duties connected with the exercise of the supreme power. Fully cognizant of this prejudice, the eunuchs, those baneful parasites of Oriental despotism whose lives were passed in an atmosphere of intrigue and corruption, dexterously prepared to avail themselves of the popular discontent for the promotion of their own designs. These incarnate fiends, who found in the betrayal of their fellow-creatures an inadequate but grateful compensation for the outrage inflicted on them by society, had acquired, with every reign, a fresh accession of pride and insolence. A picked body of a thousand of them constituted the guard of the harem. Although slaves, they enjoyed exclusive privileges, and, with every opportunity for the indulgence of their dominating passion of avarice, had accumulated vast possessions. A mistaken idea, imported with other noxious principles from the Orient, caused the immunity of the eunuch and the exhibition of his opulence to be considered as a necessary appendage to the grandeur of the sovereign. As a natural result of this opinion, the impudence and oppression of this powerful caste were exercised without restraint until they became intolerable. They robbed tradesmen with impunity. They scourged with relentless brutality such unfortunate pedestrians as crossed their pathway. They invaded the privacy of households and insulted their inmates,—an inexpiable offence under Mussulman law. They borrowed large sums of money from wealthy merchants under conditions which practically amounted to confiscation. Their sanguinary brawls with the populace, in which the police dared not interfere, constantly disturbed the peace of the city. No tribunal would venture to entertain a complaint against these petty tyrants; and the equitable disposition of the Khalif himself was changed to gross partiality, where the punishment of a member of that privileged guard, whose license he considered indispensable to his own safety, was concerned. The chiefs of this corps, which was at once the terror and the reproach of the capital, were Fayic and Djaudar, one of whom was Master of the Wardrobe, the other, Grand Falconer. The affluence and power of these two officials; the lucrative employments they controlled; the boundless opportunities for peculation they enjoyed and improved; their constant and unceremonious access to the monarch; their almost irresponsible authority over the palace and the harem, gave them a consideration not possessed by any of the other great dignitaries of the khalifate. From all who approached them they exacted the deference and the etiquette due only to those in the highest station. An armed retinue, splendidly equipped, guarded their persons when they went abroad. In accordance with the anomalous conditions which prevailed in the society of Moorish Spain,—where soldiers served eunuchs and freemen obeyed the behests of slaves,—a numerous following of dependents and employees, who had not been subjected to either the torture of emasculation or the restraints of servitude, awaited the pleasure of the unprincipled favorites of royalty. Their consequence was disclosed by the multitudes that incessantly besieged the gates of their palaces. The horror and mystery which invested their character and their lives were frequently increased by the sudden and permanent disappearance of persons who were known to have incurred their enmity.

The death of Al-Hakem was unexpected, and no one was present during his last moments excepting the chief eunuchs, Fayic and Djaudar. These crafty individuals, conscious of the unpopularity of their caste, and knowing that their crimes would receive scant indulgence at the hands of the ministers Ibn-abi-Amir and Moshafi, determined to suppress for a time the intelligence of the Khalif's death, change the succession, and thereby secure for themselves a continuance of power. The prince they selected to occupy the vacant throne was Moghira, the brother of Al-Hakem. But a first and indispensable requisite for the success of the enterprise was, according to the practical Djaudar, the assassination of the vizier Moshafi. To this suggestion, Fayic, who underestimated the capacity and resolution of the minister, refused to accede. After some discussion, it was determined to send for Moshafi, and endeavor, by every inducement possible, to turn him from his allegiance. Nothing could have been more gratifying to the conspirators than the compliance of the vizier. He appeared to enter heartily into the scheme, gave his new associates much wise counsel, and promised that he in person would, at the proper moment, guard the door of the palace. Then returning to his residence, he hastily assembled a number of civil and military officials upon whose fidelity he could depend, and acquainted them with the plot that had just come to his knowledge. The danger was imminent; the accession of Moghira, and the supremacy of the eunuchs which was certain to result from it and would affect the life or fortunes of every prominent member of the government, demanded the most energetic action. It was determined, without a dissenting voice, that Moghira should be put to death. This resolution was easily taken, but its execution was a different matter. The amiable and inoffensive character of the prince rendered his deliberate assassination extremely repugnant even to men whose cruel habits and sanguinary experience had ordinarily rendered them deaf to the appeals of pity. At length, Ibn-abi-Amir rose amidst the silent assembly, and agreed to assume the invidious office of executioner. At the head of a strong guard, he proceeded at once to the palace of the unhappy Moghira, who was equally unconscious of the death of his brother, of the dangerous honor for which the ambition of the eunuchs had designated him, and of the stern decree which had just sealed his fate. With all the matchless courtesy for which he was distinguished, the messenger of death announced his errand. Overcome with grief at the loss of his brother, and terrified by the presence of the soldiery, Moghira, after giving utterances to the most fervid protestations of devotion to his nephew, implored with tears the clemency of the minister. Deeply moved by the distress of the prince, the resolution of Ibn-abi-Amir faltered, and he despatched a messenger to the vizier, declaring his confidence in the loyalty of Moghira, and suggesting that the decree of the council should be modified and imprisonment be substituted for the penalty of death. The reply of Moshafi was peremptory: "Execute him at once; if thou dost not like the commission thou hast voluntarily undertaken, I will send another not troubled with such unseasonable scruples." Further delay was out of the question; Moghira was strangled, and the room in which the crime was perpetrated was at once walled up with solid masonry. The memory of this deed, as cruel as it was unwise, long rankled in the heart of Ibn-abi-Amir. He never forgave the vizier for the guilt he had incurred through his agency, by an act whose expediency no sophistry could establish, and whose barbarity no political necessity could excuse. The time was soon to come when the relentless Moshafi was to experience, in his turn, all the bitterness of death without its consolations; all the mortifications which attend the loss of power and fortune; all the pangs of conscience which proceed from the violation of the immutable laws of justice and the wanton sacrifice of the most obvious principles of morality.

The placid exterior of Ibn-abi-Amir gave no sign of his outraged feelings when he returned to his colleagues, but his spirit had been deeply moved, and, with the vindictive energy of his nature, he treasured up against the vizier a terrible account to be discharged upon the day of reckoning.

The chief eunuchs received with consternation the news of the betrayal of their project and the death of the prince; but they were so satisfied of the security of their power that they did not for an instant suspend their treasonable operations. Their emissaries, dispersed among the populace, multiplied by their artful representations the perils incident to the accession of a sovereign who had not yet passed the age of childhood. The circumstances attending the murder of Moghira—unjustifiable enough in themselves—were distorted and exaggerated. The resentment of the masses was inflamed against the ministers, whose rapacity and ambition, it was suggested, would subordinate to their own designs every consideration connected with the safety of the state and the prosperity of the empire. The services of influential and mercenary demagogues were enlisted; the wealth of the eunuchs was lavished without stint to secure and retain their partisans; open denunciations of the authorities were heard on every hand; the appearance of a member of the unpopular faction in the streets was the signal for a riot; and the restless and seditious population of Cordova seemed again ripe for revolution.

The manifest incompetency of Moshafi to deal with the situation impelled Ibn-abi-Amir, who had been raised to the office of vizier, to proffer to the Divan some wholesome advice, couched in terms not distinguishable from those of command. The rebellious ardor of the mob was damped by an imposing military display in which the youthful Khalif participated. The good-will of the poor was at the same time secured by the remission of certain oppressive taxes levied during the reign of Al-Hakem, and which had been the source of great annoyance and distress. The danger of an uprising having been for the moment removed, Ibn-abi-Amir bent all his energies to the destruction of the power of the eunuchs. His secret agents exercised vigilant and incessant espionage over their movements. His gold seduced their retainers. Those who had suffered from the avarice and injustice of the subordinates of the Master of the Wardrobe and the Grand Falconer were privately encouraged to institute proceedings against their oppressors. Some of the latter were imprisoned, others were executed, others again sought safety in flight. Of the chiefs, Djaudar was forced to resign his employments, and Fayic was banished to Majorca, where he died, not long afterwards, in poverty. The discomfiture of these bold conspirators allayed the popular excitement, which was principally due to their machinations, and enabled the government to turn its attention to another quarter, where the success of the Christians was causing great and increasing alarm.

The political agitation which followed the death of Al-Hakem and the settlement of the regency was well known to the courts of Leon and Navarre. The occasion was considered an auspicious one for the abrogation of treaties; for the repudiation of the hateful obligations of tribute; for the seizure of territory acquired by Moslem valor; for the recovery of military prestige lost since the time of the great Abd-al-Rahman. The active partisans of the North accordingly swarmed over the unprotected provinces, whose inhabitants had slackened their vigilance and neglected their arms during the long and pacific reign of Al-Hakem. Little resistance was encountered, owing to the incompetency of the officers charged with the defence of the frontier. The habitual indolence of Moshafi was soon found to be unable to cope with these enterprising marauders, who eluded his squadrons and spread terror and ruin among the rich plantations and hamlets of Andalusia. At length, emboldened by success, they passed the Sierra Morena, and the ominous spectacle of the banners of the infidel was once more visible from the towers of the capital. This defiance was more than the pride of the Sultana could endure. She sent for Ibn-abi-Amir, and implored him to chastise the insolence of the Christians. A council was accordingly held, and an expedition resolved upon. The vizier, with his usual address, managed to be assigned to the supreme command, and, to avoid as far as possible the contingency of a reverse, the wary general, with the closest discrimination, selected for this service the most trustworthy officers and the most experienced veterans of the army.

At this time Ibn-abi-Amir had just entered his thirty-ninth year. Of the theory of the art of war he knew but little, of the practical application of its principles absolutely nothing. His entire life had been passed in avocations whose duties were rather a hinderance than an aid to service in the field. But the powers of his mind, equal to any emergency, enabled him to surmount with ease the apparently insuperable obstacles that now confronted him. If he was deficient in military knowledge and experience, he was, on the other hand, endowed with qualities too often ignored or despised by the martinet. In prudence, in coolness, in judgment, in courage, he was not surpassed by the most accomplished leader that ever directed the movements of an army. The hitherto successful realization of his projects, which he had foreseen and carefully planned, inspired him with a just, but not an arrogant, confidence in the capabilities of his genius. He possessed the secret of ingratiating himself with the soldiers, whose devotion to his person subsequently carried the day on many a hard-fought and doubtful field. All, of whatever rank, shared most liberally the fruits of his bounty. The officers were daily entertained at his table. Individual prowess was generously rewarded. The most trifling infraction of discipline was punished with inflexible severity. Such was the policy that guided the conduct of the new general from the very beginning of his martial career. Under the circumstances, it is not at all surprising that his arms for a quarter of a century should have been absolutely invincible.

The first expedition of Ibn-abi-Amir was not remarkable for the results which it accomplished in a military point of view. But its moral effects upon both Moslem and Christian were far more important than would seem to proceed from a mere foray into the country of the enemy. It revived the declining prestige of the khalifate. It raised the flagging ardor of the soldiery, enervated by the vices and the indolence of an uneventful and protracted peace. It aroused well-grounded hopes of future conquest and glory under a new and enterprising commander. It convinced the implacable enemies of Islam that the warlike spirit which had so long defeated their projects and obstructed their ambition was not yet extinct. The flying squadrons of Leonese ceased to plunder the villages of Andalusia. The shepherd and the husbandman were henceforth permitted to pursue their vocations in security. The standards of the infidel, emblazoned with the detested symbol of the cross, no longer disturbed the devotions or insulted the majesty of the Moslem capital.

The power of Ibn-abi-Amir being established upon a solid foundation, he began to mature plans he had long meditated for the acquisition and exercise of the supreme authority. The talents he had exhibited, the success he had achieved, had made him the most distinguished and commanding figure in the kingdom. He now determined to disembarrass himself, in turn, of such great officials of state as might be able to thwart him in the execution of his ambitious projects, and he decided to begin with Moshafi, the only one whose eminent position could suggest the possibility of rivalry. In the execution of this project, antipathy of race, ever conspicuous in the Moorish contests for supremacy, lent its aid to jealousy of power. Moshafi was of Berber extraction, and consequently obnoxious to the Arab faction to which Ibn-abi-Amir belonged. The vizier owed the consideration in which he was held by Al-Hakem solely to his literary attainments, which were a greater recommendation to the favor of that monarch than either talents for statesmanship or renown in arms. His pride was excessive; his character lacked decision; his penuriousness was proverbial; his peculations conspicuous in a court where moral and political integrity were the exception. He was already a mere puppet in the hands of his colleague, whose genius had obtained over his feeble and irresolute mind a complete ascendency. While maintaining the closest relations with Moshafi, his perfidious enemy availed himself of every means to effect his ruin. He constantly excited against him the prejudices of the Sultana Aurora. He obtained the promotion of Ghalib, the most distinguished officer of the army, and between whom and Moshafi there existed a bitter feud, to the highest rank in the military service. He even enlisted the aid of the unsuspicious vizier for this purpose by representing the necessity of a reconciliation with that leader, whose popularity with the soldiery, seconded by his ambition, might at any time accomplish the overthrow of the administration. Then, this adept in the arts of intrigue contracted an intimate alliance with Ghalib, whose principal object was the destruction of the obnoxious vizier. The two associates worked for a time in harmony for the promotion of their common interests. Each lauded to the skies the talents and the virtues of the other. In return for the high commands with which he had been invested, Ghalib exaggerated the achievements of his companion. His fulsome praise of the latter secured for him the prefecture of Cordova, an appointment which involved the dismissal of the son of Moshafi, who enjoyed the emoluments without discharging the duties of that responsible office. The venality of this youth, from whom money could at any time obtain immunity from punishment for even the most notorious criminal, had completely disorganized the police system of the city. Footpads infested the streets. Theft and murder were of nightly occurrence, and the citizens were compelled to rely upon their own vigilance and courage for that protection to which they were entitled by law. The mercenary character of the prefect, and the general demoralization of the municipal government, had, in addition to the refuse of a great capital, attracted from far and near bands of desperate characters, eager to profit by the spoils of successful and unmolested robbery.

But a change was now at hand. The new prefect brought to the administration of the affairs of his office the same inflexible justice, the same severity, the same resolution, which had elsewhere distinguished his conduct in a public capacity. The police system was remodelled. Its members, terrified by some salutary examples, which the exigencies of the service required, no longer fraternized with criminals. The foreign outlaws fled precipitately from the city. The streets could once more be traversed in security, the suburbs ceased to be the scene of tumult and disorder. The advantages of rank and fortune gave no immunity to offenders under the stern jurisdiction of Ibn-abi-Amir. Even the ties of blood were ignored by this impartial magistrate, for his own son, having been convicted of some violation of the law, received such a terrible scourging that he died under the hands of the executioner.

In the meantime, the friends of Moshafi had called his attention to the dangers that threatened him, and which his perceptions had not been acute enough to detect. The crisis was imminent, and the vizier saw no other means to counteract the insidious designs of his rival except by courting the favor of his ancient enemy Ghalib. He determined at once upon a bold stroke of policy, and, with every manifestation of honor and deference, requested the hand of the daughter of Ghalib for one of his sons. The pride of the veteran, despite his deep-seated feelings of enmity, was flattered by the compliment. The family of Moshafi, while not noble, was one of the most distinguished in Andalusia. His wealth, acquired by years of peculation, was known to be immense, and his authority nominally directed the affairs of the khalifate. Impressed with the advantages of such a matrimonial alliance, Ghalib readily assented to the proposition of the vizier. Delighted beyond measure with his success, Moshafi lost no time in arranging the preliminaries; the marriage-contract was signed, and a day appointed for the final ceremony. But these arrangements could not be concluded without the knowledge of the spies of Ibn-abi-Amir, some of whom were members of the household of the vizier. The latter soon discovered that he was no match for his wily adversary. His plots were met by counter-plots. The influence of the Sultana, supported by the entire following of Ibn-abi-Amir, whose friends included some of the highest functionaries of the khalifate, was exerted to shake the resolution of Ghalib. The motives of Moshafi were impugned. It was artfully insinuated that this sudden demonstration of friendship was only a convenient mask for some deep-laid act of perfidy. The implacable hatred so long entertained by the vizier against the veteran commander gave considerable color of probability to this suggestion. And finally, Ibn-abi-Amir himself made a formal demand for the hand of the beautiful Asma, protesting that the son of the plebeian Moshafi was unworthy of a damsel whose rank and beauty might well entitle her to be the bride of the most powerful subject of the Moslem empire. The constancy of Ghalib was not proof against these plausible representations. Without warning, he repudiated his engagements with Moshafi. His daughter became the wife of Ibn-abi-Amir; their nuptials were celebrated with a pomp exceeding anything of the kind ever held in the capital; and the bridegroom himself was appointed to the office of hajib, the most exalted dignity in the gift of the crown.

From this time the fall of Moshafi was rapid. The worthless friends of his prosperity, one by one, abandoned him. He was imprisoned along with the male members of his family, and their property was seized pending an investigation for malfeasance in office. There was no difficulty in establishing the truth of this accusation. The offences of the culprits had been flagrant and notorious. The sentence of confiscation imposed upon them swept into the public coffers a great treasure, most of which had been acquired by fraud and extortion. Such of the relatives of the vizier as had rendered themselves especially offensive to their persecutor were strangled. Others managed to eke out a wretched subsistence by the most menial occupations, and even by beggary. The venerable Moshafi, after suffering for years every humiliation that could be imposed by the ingenuity of hatred and the insolence of power, perished in some unknown way by violence, and his body was carried to the grave with but little more ceremony than usually attended the interment of a pauper.

While these events were transpiring, a formidable conspiracy for the assassination of the Khalif and the promotion of one of his cousins, Abd-al-Rahman-Ibn-Obeydallah, to the royal dignity, was maturing in the capital. The great majority of the literary men,—the former companions and instructors of Ibn-abi-Amir,—with officials who had viewed his elevation with unconcealed envy and hatred, stimulated by mediocrity and conscious incompetence, were the promoters of the enterprise. The dangerous position of leader was assumed by the eunuch Djaudar, who was anxious to avenge his disgrace, to retrieve his fortunes, and to restore the failing credit of his caste. There was scarcely a kadi, a jurist, a poet of the court, or a professor of the University who was not cognizant of the plot. The faquis and the theologians, who considered the orthodoxy of Ibn-abi-Amir as more than doubtful, were concerned in it to a man. The prefect, Ziyad-Ibn-Aflah, who had succeeded Ibn-abi-Amir in the control of the municipal affairs of Cordova, promised his co-operation, and agreed to place the armed force under his command at the disposal of the conspirators. It was decided that Djaudar should put the Khalif to death. The day for action arrived; the palace was designedly abandoned by the police; and Djaudar obtained without suspicion an audience with Hischem. But, either through awkwardness or irresolution, the blow aimed at the heart of the Khalif fell short; the assassin was overpowered; and the prefect, having been summoned to the palace and seeing that all was lost, endeavored to remove suspicion from himself by the arrest and zealous prosecution of his accomplices. The leading conspirators were crucified, and punishments of greater or less severity were inflicted upon the others. The double traitor, Ziyad-Ibn-Aflah, with brazen effrontery, assisted at the trial and voted for the condemnation of his former associates.

Aware that his liberal views on the subject of religion, and the philosophical studies with which he frequently occupied his leisure, had created against him a feeling which was largely responsible for the recent conspiracy, and which might eventually be productive of more serious disorders, Ibn-abi-Amir determined to make some concessions to the prejudices of the theologians. The broad toleration of the two former reigns, when skepticism was fashionable and the cultivation of philosophy general and popular, had been followed by a reaction. The influence of the Malikites had been re-established, and it was easy for these fanatics to excite popular odium against any one suspected of entertaining heretical opinions. When the obnoxious individual filled a post of eminence in the state, a hint from a faqui might be equivalent to a sentence of death. The native shrewdness of Ibn-abi-Amir suggested a means of counteracting this danger. Having carefully selected the theologians of the capital most notorious for their intolerance, he invited them to the palace and solemnly informed them that the presence of the philosophical and scientific works in the library of Al-Hakem was a great burden upon his conscience, and requested their assistance in purging the collection of books treating of subjects whose study was not sanctioned by the Koran. Conducted into the immense library whose shelves were covered with the literary treasures of Europe and Asia, the bigoted enemies of learning entered upon their task with alacrity. The collection was examined in detail, and the works known or suspected to be tainted with heterodox sentiments were consigned to the flames. The distinguished penitent improved the occasion to offer an edifying exhibition of zeal by personally assisting in the destruction of the proscribed volumes.

History has failed to acquaint us with the magnitude of this loss. It must have been important, however, even if due allowance be made for the ignorance of the muftis and faquis, who had but slight knowledge of any save theological literature, and whose industry must have been sorely taxed by the laborious scrutiny of six hundred thousand volumes. Henceforth no one ventured to question the orthodoxy of the minister. He patronized with marked partiality all members of the religious profession; flattered their pride by his attention to their prosy discourses; won their affection by his liberality; elicited their praise by his denunciation of infidels. He demonstrated that the skill of his youth had not departed from him by the production of a beautiful copy of the Koran, written entirely by his own hand, which he never suffered to leave his person, and constantly perused in public with such apparent unction that all who beheld him were greatly impressed with this remarkable display of devotion.

Moshafi having been disposed of, it was now the turn of Ghalib. The powerful interest of Ibn-abi-Amir with the Sultana and the nobles which had raised him to the rank of hajib placed him on a political equality with his father-in-law. The latter was constantly at variance with his associate, whom he considered as his inferior, but whose ascendency in the conduct of the administration he was nevertheless forced to acknowledge. The annoyance Ibn-abi-Amir suffered from these disputes, and the fact that Ghalib was now the sole obstacle interposed between his ambition and the practical sovereignty of the empire, led him to begin without delay the scheme which he had devised for the overthrow of his colleague. The first, and indeed the indispensable, requisite of success was the control of the army. The power of the audacious minister, which was dreaded by every civil functionary of the khalifate, virtually ended at the outposts of the nearest garrison. The soldiery knew him only as a kadi; and while he had behaved with credit in more than one engagement, and had established a name for generosity, his military reputation and popularity had so far proved to be neither brilliant nor enduring. The attachment of the soldiers centred in Ghalib. They had shared together the hardships and the glory of many arduous campaigns. Their interests had long been identical, and any demonstration involving the honor or the safety of the general would have been resisted by the entire military force of the monarchy. The army consisted mainly of Arabs, the Berbers enlisted by Abd-al-Rahman III. having been gradually disbanded and natives of the Peninsula substituted for them under Al-Hakem. The partiality of their commander had indulged them in frequent and serious infractions of discipline. Their equipment was not uniform, and was often defective. The awkwardness of the horsemen was the jest of foreigners. In many respects the organization of the various corps did not differ from that of a disorderly and inefficient militia.

The experience acquired by Ibn-abi-Amir during his sojourn in Africa had convinced him of the excellence of the Mauritanian cavalry, whose reputation indeed dated from the First Punic War. The Spanish posts in that country had been abandoned, with the exception of Ceuta, and the protectorate formerly exercised by the khalif removed. In consequence of this measure, and there being no central power to restrain the Berbers, the entire region became at once a prey to anarchy. At the time the minister was planning a thorough reorganization of the army, intelligence was conveyed to him by the governor of Ceuta that a considerable detachment of Berbers, who had been worsted in a recent battle and were absolutely impoverished, had appealed to him for protection, which he had temporarily afforded them. The pleasure of the government was requested respecting the final disposition of these refugees. The order was immediately sent to propose to them enlistment in the army of the khalifate. The offer was accepted without hesitation, and the inhabitants of Algeziras beheld with consternation and disgust the disembarkation of a horde of ferocious warriors clothed in rags and mounted on horses whose skeleton forms seemed hardly capable of sustaining even the weight of their emaciated riders. But the sagacious hajib, who recognized in these uncouth barbarians the formidable instruments of a soaring ambition, entertained his new *protégés* with royal hospitality. The finest arms and horses were furnished them. Their boundless rapacity was gratified by every concession that insolence could demand or prodigality afford.

The famished bandit, who had lately roamed the desert without shelter, now revelled in the luxuries of a palace. The servile dependent who a few months before had trembled at the voice of some vagabond sheik was now the master of a hundred slaves. The news of this astonishing good fortune was speedily transmitted to Africa. Thousands of volunteers applied for admission to the service of so generous a patron. The object of Ibn-abi-Amir was accomplished, and with secret exultation he saw placed at his absolute disposal a powerful body of troops, whose allegiance was due to himself alone, who knew and cared nothing for patriotic sentiment, and who were practically isolated from the existing military system. His efforts, however, were not confined to the enlistment of Berber mercenaries. From the opposite quarter of the compass, from a region and a nation where one would least suspect a disposition to serve under the banners of Islam, his army received important accessions. It does not appear that before the reign of Hischem any systematic attempt was made to attract to the service of the khalifate the Christians of the North, whose hostility to their neighbors was hereditary and instinctive, dictated as well by motives of patriotism as by the prejudices and the distorted maxims of their religion. The civil wars of fifty years; the uncertain allegiance claimed by a succession of known usurpers and legal sovereigns of suspicious title; the arrogance of the priesthood, which claimed ascendency over the crown, had destroyed the unity and absorbed the limited pecuniary resources of the kingdoms of Northern Spain. The population had increased, while the means of subsistence had been constantly diminishing. The insecurity of property discouraged agriculture in a land where untiring industry was at all times indispensable to procure the most common necessaries of life. The country was overrun by armed men, who did not hesitate, when occasion demanded, to rudely strip the unfortunate peasant of the hard-earned fruits of his labor. The lofty stature and extraordinary strength of these mountaineers, their unequalled powers of endurance, their bravery and their steadiness in battle, rendered them most desirable recruits. The emissaries of Ibn-abi-Amir experienced no difficulty in convincing them of the benefits they would receive by a change of masters. A considerable detachment repaired to Cordova and entered the army of the Khalif. The minister treated them with even greater indulgence than he had shown to the Africans. They received double pay. They were lodged in palatial quarters. They were magnificently armed and mounted, and provided with every attainable comfort and luxury. The partiality of the hajib for these favorite mercenaries sometimes even caused him to depart from the equity which had heretofore characterized his judicial conduct. In the controversies he was called upon, from time to time, to settle between his Moslem subjects and his Christian guards, his decisions were almost invariably rendered in favor of the latter. The effects of this politic course soon became apparent. The Castilians and Navarrese, like the Berbers, volunteered in larger numbers than could be accommodated. Only picked men were accepted by the recruiting officers; and a corps was formed which, for physical strength, perfection of armament, and excellence of discipline, had not its counterpart in Europe.

While Ibn-abi-Amir was thus, day by day, tightening his grasp upon the civil and military departments of the government, he was, at the same time, gradually undermining the support and weakening the power of his rival. The custom of tribal organization, inherited from the pre-Islamic era, still prevailed in the army. Members of the same tribe, commanded by chiefs of their own kindred, were mustered into the service together. In numerous instances, by intermarriage with individuals of other races, the chain of relationship had been broken. Clannish prejudice had, however, survived the record of genealogies, for many were found enrolled among the various tribes who evidently had not the remotest claim to such association. The policy of Ibn-abi-Amir was directed to the final abrogation of these ancient distinctions. The Arabs were distributed among the strongest divisions of the Berber and Christian mercenaries. By this means their identity was lost amidst a crowd of foreigners ignorant alike of their customs, their traditions, and, not infrequently, of their language. The favorite troops of Ghalib were, by this means, quietly and expeditiously scattered beyond the hope of reorganization. The discipline of the army was sedulously improved. Officers were appointed to command whose first qualification was devotion to the personal interests of the hajib, and whose second was based upon their experience in war and their reputation for courage. Military regulations were enforced with such severity that even the accidental exposure of a sword during parade was punished with death.

Having to his entire satisfaction obtained control of the army, Ibn-abi-Amir now proposed to himself the audacious project of placing and retaining the youthful Khalif in a condition of perpetual tutelage. His mother, over whom the minister still retained his ascendency, strange to relate, willingly lent her aid to the accomplishment of this nefarious design. The talents of the young prince, at that time about fifteen years old, are stated by contemporaneous writers to have been far above mediocrity. Under favorable circumstances, it is possible that he might have become a ruler not inferior to the most distinguished of his line. But, unhappily, every effort was exerted to dwarf his intellect and impair his physical powers. He was kept in strict seclusion in the palace of Medina-al-Zahrâ. His teachers were removed, and his education systematically neglected. It was constantly inculcated upon him that his chief duties as a monarch were the diligent perusal of the Koran and the distribution of alms. His body was emaciated, and his intellectual faculties weakened, by the frequent and protracted fasts which his religious advisers enjoined. These regulations, sufficiently injurious to both the body and the mind of youth, were not to be compared in their destructive effects with the sensual excesses encouraged by the temptations of the harem. In its retired and mysterious apartments everything was favorable to the prococious development of the passions. Crowds of beautiful slaves constantly surrounded him, and performed for his amusement the licentious dances of the East. The rarest perfumes diffused their intoxicating odors through the dimly-lighted apartments. Here, safe from the frowning glances of faqui and santon, could be quaffed, to the point of repletion and insensibility, the delicious wines of Spain. The attendants received peremptory instructions to lose no opportunity of corrupting and brutalizing their helpless charge. In consequence, the unfortunate Hischem was degraded by the habitual practice of the most revolting vices. His prematurely failing powers were at first stimulated by aphrodisiacs. His virility was afterwards permanently impaired by drugs administered for that purpose by eunuchs in the pay of the minister. With the advance of the prince in years, the conditions and diversions of childhood remained unchanged. The same toys amused his idle moments. The same devotional exercises were daily enforced by his spiritual guides. His world was bounded by the walls of the palace, within which no one unauthorized by the hajib could enter. Alert and observant spies reported his most trivial speeches, his most puerile actions. It was gravely suggested to him that the burden of public affairs was too weighty for his shoulders; that the favor of God—the object of every true Mussulman—was most easily secured by devotional exercises; and that the administration of the government should be confided to others who could assume the responsibilities, without compromising the future hopes, of the Commander of the Faithful. The Khalif's voluntary acceptance of these propositions—and especially of the last one—was proclaimed far and wide by the omnipresent agents of the hajib. But the latter, despite his apparent assurance, knew only too well the desperate game he was playing. He was familiar with the uncertainty of popular favor and the prodigious energy suddenly developed by revolutions. His secret enemies, many of them able and determined men, swarmed alike in the literary professions and among the populace of the capital. The isolation of the Khalif was complete, but the treachery of a sentinel or the venality of a slave might, at any time, mature a conspiracy or effect the liberation of the royal prisoner. In either of these contingencies, the life of the minister would not be worth a moment's purchase were he found within the walls of Medina-al-Zahrâ. Impressed with this fact, he secured a large estate east of Cordova, and erected there a residence which united the twofold advantage of castle and palace, and to which he gave the name of Zahira. The place was of great strength, and could accommodate a numerous garrison. When it was completed, Ibn-abi-Amir removed there all the public records, and in its halls were henceforth framed the edicts which, issued in the Khalif's name, gave law to the people of the Peninsula. Buildings were erected for the convenience of the great officials of the government, and Zahira soon acquired the inhabitants and assumed the appearance of a city. The employees of the court, the personal adherents of the minister, and the herd of parasites who infested the purlieus of every palace, together with a multitude of tradesmen and artificers, took up their residence in the neighborhood; and an idea may be formed of the extent of Zahira when it is remembered that, although the residence of Ibn-abi-Amir was twelve miles from Cordova, the gardens of its environs reached to the banks of the Guadalquivir immediately opposite the capital, of which it, in fact, formed one of the most attractive suburbs.

Of this villa a story is told by the Arab historians which illustrates at once the wealth, the profusion, and the love of ostentation so prominent in the character of the Oriental. With a view of impressing the envoys of the King of Navarre with his power and opulence, the hajib ordered a great lake in the gardens of Zahira to be planted with water-lilies. Into each of the flowers, during the night, he caused to be placed a gold or silver coin, large numbers of which he had ordered struck especially for that purpose. The weight of the precious metals required was two hundred pounds. At the audience, which took place at sunrise, in addition to the grand civil and military display usual on such occasions, a body of eunuchs, a thousand in number and equally divided, stood on each side of the throne. All were dressed in white silk. The robes of five hundred were embroidered with gold, those of the others with silver. Sashes of gold or silver tissue encircled their waists, and each carried a gold or silver tray. As the first rays of the sun lighted up the splendors of the scene, the eunuchs moved forward with military precision, gathered the lilies, and emptied their precious contents at the feet of their master in a great heap of glittering coin. The effect of this exhibition upon the simple mountaineers of Navarre may be imagined. The reputation of the hajib's resources, already great, was magnified a hundred-fold. Mystified by the apparent prodigy, the ambassadors reported to their king that even the earth and the water surrendered their hidden treasures at the command of the omnipotent Mohammedan ruler.

While the astute and politic Ibn-abi-Amir was perfecting his arrangements to secure absolute control of the empire, he treated Ghalib with far more than ordinary consideration. He exhibited towards him, on all occasions, the most distinguished courtesy. He deferred to his opinion on questions of minor importance. He humbly solicited his advice when satisfied that its acceptance would not interfere with the accomplishment of his plans. But the shrewd old soldier was not to be imposed upon by those flattering evidences of esteem and attachment. Intensely loyal to the House of Ommeyah, he had seen with disgust and apprehension the restraint of the Khalif and the usurpation of his prerogatives. He had viewed with scarcely less dismay the inordinate ambition of his colleague and the predominance to which he had attained.

While he did not at first perceive the ultimate effect of the reorganization of the military service, the disbanding and transfer to distant and widely separated provinces of those divisions most attached to his person, as well as the incorporation of his favorites into the corps of foreign mercenaries, finally opened his eyes to the consequences of the policy of his son-in-law. But it was then too late. The mischief had already been accomplished. The indignation of the general at first found vent in ineffectual reproaches. At length, during an expedition into the enemy's country, while the two ministers were reconnoitring from the summit of a tower, after a violent quarrel Ghalib drew his sword and attacked his associate. The latter, taken by surprise, saw no other way to avoid instant death but by precipitating himself from the battlements. His flowing robes caught on a projection and saved his life. The incensed rivals separated with threats of mutual defiance; war was at once declared between them; and the diminished forces of Ghalib were strengthened by a considerable number of horsemen furnished by the King of Leon. The operations of the campaign were at first indecisive, but Ghalib, having exposed himself recklessly in an engagement, was killed; his followers were seized with a panic, and the victory remained with his fortunate adversary.

Ibn-abi-Amir was now the sole master of the Khalifate of the West. By sheer force of character, by dauntless resolution, by tireless energy, he had realized his most cherished aspirations. Without friends or the important aid of family connections, he had obtained and had already long exercised a preponderating influence in the state. His adroitness and liberality had organized a numerous faction and a formidable army, both of which served his personal interests with unswerving loyalty. The nominal sovereign of the country was virtually his servant. The entire machinery of government, with its treasures, the appointments of its officers, the distribution of its rewards, the infliction of its punishments, the supervision of its civil policy, the conduct of its campaigns, was in his hands. Such was the exalted position attained by the former unknown and impecunious student of the University, who had managed to obtain an uncertain livelihood by writing petitions for applicants for royal favor, many of whom were now his official subordinates. Through the changes of many eventful years, amidst the perils, the trials, the excitements, the triumphs, that attended his ascent to greatness, he had never forgotten the scene in the garden, where, encouraged by the hilarity of his companions, he had expressed what they considered chimerical ideas of future power and distinction. Soon after the death of Ghalib had left him free to indulge his arbitrary inclinations, he caused his four collegiate acquaintances, who had participated in the festivities of that now memorable occasion, to be brought before him. Three received from the hands of the minister himself the commissions conferring those employments which they had in merriment solicited; the fourth, after having been sternly reprimanded for the unprovoked insult he had inflicted in return for a proffered honor, was deprived of all his possessions, and led forth by slaves to perform the public and degrading penance which he himself had voluntarily prescribed.

The restraints imposed upon Hischem were now increased in severity. Formerly he had, at rare intervals, been permitted to show himself to his subjects, but the jealousy of Ibn-abi-Amir could no longer tolerate this indulgence, and the Khalif was henceforth condemned to absolute seclusion in the palace of Medina-al-Zahrâ. Even when he performed his devotions in public he was heavily veiled, and remained in the royal gallery until the last of the worshippers had left the mosque. He was not even permitted to enter the walls of his own capital, embellished with the wealth, and rendered illustrious by the renown, of a dynasty of great sovereigns who had been his kinsmen, whose name and titles he had inherited, but whose power he was destined never to enjoy. His name was mentioned in the khotba, or prayer, offered on Fridays in the mosques; it appeared on the coins side by side with that of the hajib, and was embroidered on the skirt of his robes; but these were the only surviving evidences of the existence and the authority of the last of the Ommeyades.

In the new and radical policy which Ibn-abi-Amir had inaugurated with respect to the army, he was far from being actuated by purely selfish motives. He understood thoroughly the inconstant and restless nature of the population which he ruled. Experience had repeatedly shown the perilous conditions arising from a protracted peace. The Koran enjoined perpetual war against the infidel. Such a crusade was popular with all classes,—with the theologians, whose religious animosities it gratified; with the merchants, whose trade it increased and whose coffers it replenished; with the nobility, to whom it opened an avenue to military distinction; with the soldiery, who were attracted by the prospect of unlimited plunder. Every year, from the date of his association with Ghalib in the administration, Ibn-abi-Amir had proclaimed the Djihad, and had himself taken part in two expeditions against the Christians. To this policy, whose expediency was indisputable, he publicly declared his intention to adhere. The people heard the announcement with exultation. The faquis applauded the piety of the hajib with a fervor which they scarcely vouchsafed to the deeds of the saints who filled the Moslem calendar. The constant employment of a large number of troops in hostile operations was a substantial guaranty against revolution. With this potent safeguard, the dangers of sedition were no longer to be apprehended. The passions and the energy of the nation were to be expended in a war beyond the borders of the monarchy. But still another consideration influenced the mind of the great statesman. He was zealously solicitous for the honor, profoundly ambitious for the glory, of his country. He desired to extend her frontiers; to recover the territory that had been conquered from or basely yielded by her sovereigns, as well as to chastise her blaspheming enemies.

Of the greater number of the fifty-two campaigns directed by Ibn-abi-Amir, the chroniclers of the time have left us no record. Many of them, doubtless, were mere marauding expeditions; but all were uniformly and signally successful. Not the slightest reverse dimmed the lustre of a single triumph. With each year the limits of the Christian kingdoms became more and more contracted, until they barely reached the southern slopes of the mountains. Beyond, stretching away to the Moslem border, was a scene of desolation, where once waving crops and verdant pastures met the eye. The presence of an occasional pile of blackened ruins was the only indication that the country had ever been inhabited. So complete was this devastation that the plains of Leon and Castile have not yet recovered from its effects. The forests then cut down have never been replanted. The curse of sterility, and the freezing winds that sweep over this cheerless region, seem to discourage the hope that it will ever regain its former productiveness. The incessant march of the Moorish armies for a quarter of a century obliterated every sign of animal and vegetable life.

The ire of Ibn-abi-Amir was aroused by the reflection that the King of Leon, despite the admonitions he had received, had dared to assist his rival Moshafi, and, bent on revenge, he made preparations for the most important expedition which had under his command ever invaded the Christian territory. The strong city of Zamora, defended by seven mighty walls and seven moats, was taken by storm. Four thousand of the enemy were butchered, and as many more led into captivity. A thousand settlements, surrounded by evidences of the thrift of an industrious peasantry, were given to the flames. A considerable number of monasteries and convents were destroyed, and their inmates delivered to the Berbers to be insulted and tortured with every device of ruthless barbarity. Realizing their common danger, the Kings of Leon and Navarre formed a defensive alliance with the Count of Castile, and ventured to resist the progress of the Moslems. The hostile armies met at Rueda, not far from Simancas. A great battle took place; the Christians were completely routed, and victors and vanquished entered Simancas together. No quarter was shown by the infuriated Saracens. Every Christian who fell into their power was put to the sword. Winter was at hand, but Ibn-abi-Amir, who understood the necessity of following up a victory, without heeding cold or tempest, moved on Leon. The city, reduced to extremity, was about to yield, when the intolerable hardships of the season, which was one of unusual severity, compelled a retreat.

After the capture of Simancas, the enthusiastic soldiery conferred upon their commander the appelation of Al-Mansur, The Victorious. This name, by which the hajib was afterwards universally designated, was, in imitation of the custom of the khalifs, accepted by him as a title of honor. With its adoption he arrogated to himself many other tokens of distinction hitherto considered the exclusive privileges of royalty. His titles were woven in golden letters on the hem of his garments. His name was associated with that of Hischem in the khotba. Of all who approached him the most servile obeisance was exacted. New and oppresssive regulations were added to the already complicated ceremonial of the court. The marks and requirements of homage extended to every member of the hajib's family, even to infants in the cradle. None of the monarchs who inherited the sceptre of Moorish Spain had ever enforced rules of this kind with equal severity, or had environed their persons with such a net-work of formal and frivolous etiquette. While the neglect of these ceremonies was followed by exemplary punishment, the least disparagement of the motives or the conduct of the minister was a mortal offence. Giafar, Prince of Zab, who commanded the first troop of Berbers enlisted in the service of Al-Mansur, actuated by envy, permitted himself to publicly criticise the policy of the hajib. The latter smiled but said nothing when the offensive language of the Mauritanian chieftain, whom he had loaded with favors, was reported to him. A magnificent banquet was soon afterwards given at Zahira, where Giafar was distinguished by the favor and courtesy of Al-Mansur above all who were present. The precepts of the law were ignored in these festivities; the richest wines flowed in profusion; and Giafar, while he was being conducted to his residence in a state of helpless intoxication, was waylaid and pierced with the daggers of assassins employed for that purpose by the minister.

The kingdoms of Christian Spain, none of which, in the tenth century, could aspire to the importance of a modern principality, and which were always at variance with each other, habitually disregarded the vital principle of unity that alone could insure their preservation. A rivalry which, under the circumstances, was suicidal flourished even in the presence of the Saracen armies. The mutual hatred engendered by provincial prejudice was incredibly intense and bitter. The pride of nationality, the spirit of patriotism, were unknown. Each state labored to defeat the undertakings of the others, no matter how meritorious was their object. The seal of the Church was branded upon all laws and political institutions. The predominating ecclesiastical element still enacted statutes, elected kings, levied taxes, commanded armies. Leon was seriously weakened by intestine quarrels. The nobles were constantly aspiring to the throne, and raising up a succession of incompetent pretenders. The powerful appanage of Castile had been permanently alienated from the crown, and enjoyed a nominal independence without the resources to maintain its lofty pretensions. Many of the bravest warriors of the North had been tempted by promises of high pay and abundant booty to renounce their allegiance, and were now serving under the standard of the khalifate. With the successes of the Moslems, and the diminution of their own territory, the mutual distrust of the Christian princes increased, and their isolation from each other became more and more complete. Their domestic feuds and irreconcilable antipathies induced them, in turn, to solicit the aid of their natural enemies, a measure which led to the imposition of tribute and the acknowledgment of vassalage. The city of Cordova was filled with Christian exiles, who continually importuned the government to embrace the cause of their several factions against their kindred and their countrymen. Some of the most serious and fatal revolutions which disturbed the peace of the northern states were traceable to this source, and to the intrigues of proscribed adventurers whose designs it was manifestly the interest of the Moslems to promote. The difficulties which beset the youth and inexperience of Ramiro III., King of Leon, caused him to appeal to the court of Cordova for support against the usurper Bermudo, who had deprived him of his capital and his crown. In return for the desired assistance, the dethroned King announced his willingness to become the feudatory of the Khalif. Before the treaty was concluded, however, Ramiro died. The partisans of the latter were numerous and powerful; the color of right as well as superiority of title would invest any candidate whom they might select; and Bermudo determined to anticipate their designs, follow the unworthy example of his deceased rival, and, by the sacrifice of his personal honor and the independence of his country, retain a portion of the authority he had illegally acquired. The humiliating concessions demanded by Al-Mansur were acquiesced in without hesitation by the cowardly usurper; homage was rendered to the hajib as suzerain; and, menaced by the presence of a Moslem army, the kingdom of Leon, every foot of which had been won from the infidels at an immense sacrifice of life and valor, for the third time since its conquest by the Asturians descended to the position of a tributary principality.

Having reduced the kingdoms of the North to such a condition of helplessness that he had nothing to fear from their hostility, Al-Mansur now directed his attention towards a country which had long enjoyed immunity from Moslem invasion. The County of Catalonia, while a nominal appanage of France, was ruled by its chief magistrate with all the attributes of despotic sovereignty. The weakness or the apprehensions of former khalifs had deterred them from provoking a contest which might bring upon them, in addition to their domestic foes, the united forces of the French monarchy. These fears, however, were ill founded. The provinces of that kingdom, like those of Christian Spain, were a prey to internal discord. The society of France was in a state of transition. A bitter contest was raging between feudal pretensions and royal prerogative. The crown had no resources to squander in the defence of a distant and unprofitable dependency, and the haughty nobles would have resisted an attempt to levy troops for a campaign of doubtful issue beyond the Pyrenees. All these facts were known to Al-Mansur, whose spies infested every court in Europe. His resolution formed, the minister caused the Holy War to be proclaimed against the Catalans. It was the twenty-third expedition of his reign. Elated by the hope of fresh victories, volunteers responded by thousands. A great army was mustered, which was met on the frontier by the Catalan troops commanded by Count Borel in person. An engagement took place, but the Christians, long unaccustomed to war, could not stand before the veterans of the khalifate. They were defeated with serious loss, and, five days afterwards, Barcelona was stormed and delivered over to pillage. Of the inhabitants few escaped death or captivity excepting the Jews, those constant sympathizers with the Moslems, who, early recognizing the advantageous situation of Barcelona, had settled there in large numbers, had accumulated vast fortunes, had risen to unrivalled eminence in the knowledge and practice of medicine, and had founded commercial establishments whose interests were protected and whose influence was acknowledged in every country of the globe. The Count preserved the remainder of his dominions from a similar fate by the payment of an immense ransom. This dearly-purchased immunity proved the salvation of Eastern Spain, which, unable to withstand the attacks of the Moslems, and entirely without hope of foreign aid, must otherwise have been eventually added to the realm of Islam.

Turning his piercing glance towards every point of the compass where a victory could be gained or an enemy humiliated, Al-Mansur now determined to interfere once more in the affairs of Africa. In that country the partisans of the House of Ommeyah, after many vicissitudes, had once more regained the ascendency. But scarcely was this result accomplished, when Ibn-Kenun, the last prince of the Edrisite dynasty, who, at his own request, had been sent to Tunis by Al-Hakem, on condition that he would never again set foot on his ancient domain, appeared to assert his claims as hereditary sovereign of Mauritania. For ten years he had been the guest of the Fatimite Khalif of Egypt, whose real or pretended descent from a common ancestor afforded a specious pretext for granting the exile protection. Overcome by his importunities, the Sultan had at length consented to assist his troublesome kinsman to regain his throne. Negotiations were entered into with the Berbers. The Egyptian monarch furnished a considerable sum of money and a detachment of soldiers, and Ibn-Kenun was received by his former subjects with every manifestation of loyalty. The Ommeyade cause speedily declined; its partisans were put to flight in repeated skirmishes; their strongholds fell into the hands of the enemy, and the dreadful prospect of African invasion once more confronted the inhabitants of the Peninsula.

It was the intelligence of these disasters, received at Barcelona, which, far more than the great ransom offered by Count Borel, determined Al-Mansur to relinquish the conquest of Catalonia. A division of the victorious army, commanded by Askaledja, cousin of the hajib, disembarked at Ceuta before Ibn-Kenun knew that Al-Mansur intended to oppose him. The Edrisite prince was beaten, and surrendered under condition of a safe-conduct to Cordova, with permission to make that city his future residence. But in the signing of this convention the self-esteem of the Saracen general had permitted him to exceed his authority. The dangerous character of Ibn-Kenun, as well as considerations of public safety, demanded the adoption of a less indulgent policy towards such an inveterate foe of the khalifate. The agreement of Askaledja was repudiated by Al-Mansur, and Ibn-

Kenun, having been brought a prisoner to Algeziras, was beheaded without ceremony. This flagrant disregard of a solemn treaty, a deed which not only impugned the honor of the hajib's lieutenant but was branded as a horrible sacrilege, caused great dissatisfaction throughout Andalusia. The victim was one of the descendants of Ali, regarded by a numerous sect as the incarnation of divinity, and revered by a majority of believers throughout the Moslem world. The indignation of the populace found vent in murmurs and menaces. Askaledja, infuriated beyond measure, went so far as to denounce his superior to the troops under his command. The maintenance of order and the requirements of discipline could not tolerate such an exhibition of insubordination; and the imprudent officer was promptly arrested for treason, found guilty, and executed. This act of justice, although approved by the Divan, only aggravated the popular resentment. The minister once more realized that the empire he had secured by intrigue must be constantly sustained by arms. It was necessary to divert the attention of the people from the severe measures indispensable to domestic tranquillity to meritorious schemes of foreign conquest. An opportune pretext for a rupture with the King of Leon had recently presented itself. The Moorish force, entertained by Bermudo under pretence of maintaining his authority, but really to overawe the usurper and enforce the payment of tribute, had signalized its residence among the infidels by the perpetration of every kind of outrage. It was in vain that Bermudo remonstrated; his complaints were received by the government at Cordova with silent contempt. Then, adopting the only cause possible under the circumstances, he appealed to the patriotism of his subjects, assembled an army, and drove out the obnoxious intruders. The pride of Al-Mansur could not afford to brook such an insult. A strong body of Moslems attacked Coimbra, whose remote situation and distance from the usual field of operations had hitherto insured its safety. It was taken; its buildings were burned and demolished; and for seven years afterwards the site of this once flourishing city remained desolate and uninhabited. From Coimbra, crossing the Douro, the hajib directed his course straight to the enemy's capital. Formerly, protected by its massive fortifications and aided by a winter of unusual severity, the garrison had been able to defy his efforts to take it by storm. Leon was the strongest and most important fortress of the North. Its defences dated from the era of the Roman domination. Its walls, built by the architects of the Cæsars, measured more than twenty feet in thickness. Lofty towers, protected by barbicans, rose at frequent intervals of their extensive circuit, which enclosed houses massed together and constructed principally of stone. The gates were bronze and of prodigious weight. They were hung in portals faced with marble and decorated with carvings and statues. The citadel was considered absolutely impregnable. The garrison was numerous, experienced in military operations, and provided with every requisite for a protracted defence.

But the city once invested, the impetuosity and resolution of the Moslems disappointed the hopes of the besieged, who expected that the reverse attending the former attack would be repeated. The reputation of Al-Mansur was staked upon the issue. Able officers, skilled in the use of military engines which had descended from Rome and Byzantium, directed the approaches and superintended the mining of the walls. The resistance was most obstinate, but, a breach having finally been made, the veterans of Al-Mansur rushed to the assault. The governor of the city, Count Gonzalez, whom severe illness had rendered incapable of action, advised of the progress of the enemy, ordered his attendants to arm him and carry him to the front. The exhortations and the sight of its emaciated commander animated the garrison to conspicuous but unavailing deeds of valor. The front ranks of the Christians were broken, and the Moslems poured into the breach. The governor, helpless and bleeding, was killed in his litter at the head of his troops, as became a gallant and intrepid soldier. Exasperated by the stubborn resistance they had experienced, the Moslems gave no quarter. The city, after having been plundered, was razed. The enormous strength of its defences, the tenacity of the Roman masonry, constructed to defy alike the slow action of the elements and the destructive efforts of man, availed nothing against the systematic havoc of the implacable Al-Mansur. A solitary tower was left standing as a specimen of the dimensions of those fortifications which had been levelled with the ground. A vast heap of stones and rubbish marked the site of the Christian capital, where a populous town had existed from the time of Augustus, when the camp of the Legio Septima constituted an important frontier outpost of the Roman empire.

The Saracen army in its march to Leon had flanked Zamora, where Bermudo had taken refuge. Al-Mansur, on his return, prepared to besiege that city, and Bermudo took advantage of the prevailing confusion to escape with the remnant of his followers to Oviedo. Zamora surrendered, and was forthwith delivered up to the caprices of the licentious soldiery. Deserted by their monarch, the Leonese nobles hastened to make peace with the conqueror. Most of them did homage to him for their estates. The remainder, who declined to sacrifice the prejudices of a lifetime and disobey the admonitions of the Church for the enjoyment of a temporary advantage, were rewarded for their loyalty with oppression and insult. The territory which remained under the control of Bermudo at the end of this campaign was less in extent than that formerly possessed by one of his inferior vassals.

The absence of Al-Mansur had been improved by the malcontents who infested the capital in the formation of a plot which contemplated the assassination of all of the principal officials of the government, as well as the Khalif, and the partition of the states of the monarchy. Abd-al-Rahman-Ibn-Motarrif, governor of the northern frontier, was the originator of the conspiracy. Abdallah, the oldest son of the minister, several princes of the blood holding important commands, and a number of civil and military functionaries whose positions of trust rendered their complicity the more formidable, were implicated in it. The spies of Al-Mansur detected this treasonable enterprise before it was fully matured. The latter, pursuing the course he ordinarily adopted to disarm suspicion, at first treated the conspirators with conspicuous marks of favor, and then secretly invited complaints against them for other offences. Nothing was insinuated of the existence of a plot or of prosecutions for treason. Some were condemned for dishonesty and appropriation of the public treasure. Others, among them the son of Al-Mansur, and another Abdallah, who was of royal lineage and noted for his avarice, fled to the Christian court for protection. Garcia Fernandez, Count of Castile, entertained the son of the minister, until the presence of a great Moslem army admonished him that the privilege of asylum must yield to political necessity. As soon as the misguided youth fell into the hands of his father he was beheaded. Then, with exquisite cruelty, Al-Mansur devised a scheme of retaliation, which, in spite of its malice, was singularly appropriate. He determined to inflict upon the Count of Castile himself all the pangs resulting from paternal disappointment and filial ingratitude. He instigated Sancho, the son of Garcia, to form a party and drive his father from power. The nobility unanimously declared for Sancho; a Mussulman force sustained his pretensions; Al-Mansur seized Clunia and San Estevan as his share of the spoil; and Garcia, having been wounded and made captive in a skirmish, died soon afterwards in the hands of the Saracens. The perfidy of Sancho was rewarded with the government of Castile, which he held as a feudatory of the Khalif.

The fugitive King, Bermudo, whose usurpation had been attended with a series of misfortunes, and whose dominions had, with the exception of a contracted region of which Astorga was the centre, been divided between his rebellious vassals and the Moors, in defiance of the menaces of Al-Mansur, still continued to afford protection to Abdallah, the only survivor of the principal conspirators. The approach of the Mussulman troops and the seizure and sack of Astorga, convinced the obstinate monarch of the expediency of submission. Abdallah was surrendered, taken to Cordova, placed upon a camel, and conducted through the streets of that city, preceded by heralds who proclaimed him a traitor to his sovereign and an apostate to his faith. His life was spared, but he was tortured during the entire administration of Al-Mansur by being kept in daily fear of execution; a fate which he endeavored to avert by the most humiliating expressions of contrition, and by exhibitions of grovelling servility which, so far from exciting the pity of the minister, only increased his contempt.

A new and implacable adversary, and one whose position placed her beyond the reach of the minister's vengeance, now arose to defy his power. The Sultana Aurora—who united to her amorous susceptibilities all the obstinacy and vindictiveness of the Basques, to which race she belonged—had for many years entertained the closest relations with the favorite whose fortunes she had founded, and whose success she had so zealously promoted. Their intimacy, even during the lifetime of Al-Hakem, had been the scandal of the capital. But the lady, like many of her sex, was inconstant, and other lovers, including the kadi Ibn-al-Salim, also stood high in her favor. As soon as Al-Mansur no longer required her services to advance his interests, he had the imprudence to neglect his haughty mistress. Deeply piqued, she began to meditate revenge. Her social rank, the inviolability of her person, and her residence in the palace gave her advantages which she was not slow to improve. With all the fiery energy of her nature she represented to the Khalif the degradation of the position he had been compelled to assume, and urged him to assert his rights as a sovereign. Hischem, who had hitherto evinced no dissatisfaction with his condition, was roused from his lethargy. Under his mother's dictation, he made a formal demand on the minister for the prerogatives which the latter had usurped. The viceroy of Africa, Ziri-Ibn-Atia, instigated by the agents of the Sultana, rose in rebellion, and proclaimed himself the supporter of the laws of the empire and the champion of its injured monarch. The ingenuity of Aurora provided her partisans with an abundant supply of money. The vaults of the palace of Medina-al-Zahrâ, where was the national treasury, contained six million pieces of gold. They were deposited in earthenware jars, sealed with wax and impressed with the royal signet. The astute princess removed a hundred of the jars, whose contents amounted to the sum of eighty thousand dinars, broke the seals, covered the gold with honey, drugs, and syrups, and, having attached to each an appropriate label, caused them to be conveyed by her slaves to a palace in the city, whence they were, without delay, transported to Africa. The rage of Al-Mansur on finding himself thus outwitted by a woman was extreme, but it availed him nothing. He could not venture to offer violence or even reproaches to the mother of his sovereign whose servant he was in name. The trend of recent events suggested that Hischem might have consented that the money be employed for the recovery of his imperial dignity. Desirous of obtaining the sanction of law in a matter of such vital importance, Al-Mansur called the great officers of state together. To them he represented that the women of the harem were plundering the treasury, and requested permission to remove the gold from the palace. This was readily granted; but when the officers exhibited their warrant, they were refused admission to the vaults, on the plea that the Khalif had not authorized the removal of the treasure. Foiled once more, the minister—whose genius, fertile in expedients and undaunted by reverses, never once despaired of success—devised a plan whose audacity would have appalled a less determined mortal. Perfectly familiar with all the approaches to the palace, he penetrated by a secret passage to the apartments of the Khalif. His unexpected appearance and menacing aspect terrified the imbecile prince, who protested that he had no desire to thwart the designs of the minister, and, without hesitation, signed an order for the removal of the gold. The politic Al-Mansur, at the same time, extorted from him an edict by which he unreservedly renounced, in favor of the hajib, all practical control of the government of the empire. This explicit and indisputable confirmation of the authority of the latter at once legalized every act which he had already committed in a public capacity. In a measure, it invested his person with the sanctity that appertained to his master, and rendered all liable to the penalty of treason whose intemperate language or whose violence should be directed against the authorized representative of absolute sovereignty.

An enterprise of surpassing difficulty and danger, and one which the bravest of the Ommeyade khalifs had never ventured to undertake, was now planned by the greatest statesman and warrior of his age. The shrine of St. James of Compostella was one of the most renowned for wealth and sanctity in Christendom. In the marvels which had attended its foundation, in the fame of its miracles, in the number and potency of its sacred relics, in the touching interest attaching to its legends, it scarcely yielded to the sacred traditions of the Eternal City. A countless multitude of pilgrims from every country where the name of the Saviour was revered had for generations deposited their oblations upon its altars. The modest chapel which had marked the site of the apostle's grave soon after its discovery during the reign of the pious Alfonso had been replaced by a stately cathedral of marble, decorated with all the rude magnificence of which the decadent art of the age was capable. A numerous priesthood, the splendor of whose appointments and the luxury of whose lives indicated a dispensation with the vow of poverty, ministered to the wants of the pilgrims, and acknowledged, with affected gratitude and humility, the bestowal of their donations and the performance of their vows.

The reverence entertained by the Spanish Christians for the sepulchre of St. James far exceeded that with which the most fanatic Mussulman regarded the Prophet's tomb at Medina. Already, industriously propagated by monkish imposture and popular credulity, wondrous tales were whispered of the appearance of the apostle on a milk-white steed at the head of the Christian squadrons, an infallible harbinger of victory, and a delusion of ominous import to the Saracen intruders in the Peninsula. History affords no parallel to the momentous effects produced by the adoption of this frivolous legend. The circumstances of its origin, which contemptuously violated every probability of time or place; its universal acceptance by individuals of every rank in life; its subsequent extension to the distant lands of an unknown world; the blind and unquestioning faith with which the impossible miracles of its subject were received, offer an eloquent commentary on the boundless influence of the Catholic hierarchy and the debased superstition of the age.

The destruction of the church of Santiago was now the aim of Al-Mansur. The depressing influence of such a signal triumph over the adversaries of Islam, it was thought with much reason, would be incalculable. The immunity enjoyed by the Christian sanctuary of Spain was attributed by its votaries to the protection afforded by the body of the saint, far more than to the natural difficulties which an enemy must surmount to reach his shrine. Even could an invasion occur and the desecration of the cathedral be threatened, it was firmly believed that the miraculous intervention of Heaven—more marked even than that which deterred the Romans from rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem—would avert such a calamity from one of the holiest places of the Christian world. The removal of these impressions, by demonstrating the incapacity of St. James to defend his own relics, must certainly weaken the faith of the multitude in his ability to protect the lives of others. The prestige derived from the interposition of supernatural influence would be seriously impaired. The menacing spectre of the patron of Spain would no longer inspire the fanaticism of his followers to strike terror into the Saracen armies. These conclusions of

Al-Mansur, while founded on reason, in the end proved fallacious. The superstitious veneration, which, confirmed by blind ignorance and credulity for centuries, now exercised its power over an entire people, was too deeply rooted to be more than temporarily affected by the most glaring sacrilege.

The campaign was carefully planned. Every precaution was taken to provide against any possibility of failure. Marching westward, the several divisions of Moslem cavalry assembled at Coria. At Oporto they were joined by the fleet, in which the infantry had already embarked. A number of Christian vassals, attended by their retainers, responded to the summons of their suzerain, and lent their reluctant aid to the injury of their faith and the destruction of their countrymen. The Douro was crossed upon a bridge constructed of ships. Roads were cut through rocky and precipitous mountains. Broad estuaries and rivers were forded. The country, which had long suffered from repeated forays, was depopulated, and could offer no resistance. When the mountains of Galicia appeared in the distance, the resolution of the Christian allies faltered. Some of the counts entered into a secret correspondence with the enemy. Their designs were betrayed, and a number of Leonese nobles underwent the extreme penalty of treason. This salutary example insured the wavering loyalty of their companions, who henceforth found it expedient to conceal their real sentiments under an appearance of obedience and alacrity.

The region now traversed by the Moslems had hitherto been safe from their inroads. This circumstance, the sacred character of the territory, and the wealth of the clergy had attracted to the vicinity of Santiago a large and busy population. Ecclesiastical establishments abounded. Along the hill-sides were countless hermitages, shrines, and chapels. Almost every valley was occupied by a monastery or a convent. The lands susceptible of cultivation were tilled by slaves or dependents of the religious houses, whose condition differed little from that of hereditary servitude. The mansions of the prelates of high rank exhibited a palatial magnificence, and were not infrequently tenanted by occupants of the softer sex, whose charms of face and figure indicated an appreciation of female beauty hardly to be expected from their pious companions.

The utter demoralization of the Christian kingdoms through domestic feuds and incessant warfare, added to the terror inspired by the name of Al-Mansur, precluded the possibility of effectual resistance. The inhabitants, taking with them their portable property and the bones of their saints and kings, fled to the mountains or to islands off the sea-coast. Santiago was completely deserted. The invaders obtained a rich booty from the shrines of innumerable chapels and monasteries. Every building in the city, including the famous cathedral, was razed to the ground. The latter was constructed of marble and granite. Its plan and decoration exhibited the corrupt taste and barbaric splendor inherited from the Visigoths, whose faults of design had been aggravated by the native rudeness of the Galician architects. In front of the high altar stood the statue of the saint, carved by the pious but unpractised hand of a Gothic sculptor, and enclosed in a shrine of massy silver. Every portion of it except the face was painted or profusely gilded. One hand clasped a Bible, the other was raised aloft in the attitude of benediction. The kisses of innumerable pilgrims had almost obliterated the coarse and grotesque features of the image. By its side were disposed the emblems of the vagrant apostle, the staff, the calabash, the scallop shells. Its head was partially enveloped with a hood identical in shape with that worn by every pilgrim and glittering with jewels.

The statue and the tomb of the apostle escaped desecration, through the policy of Al-Mansur, who feared to exasperate his allies, already shocked by the sacrilegious deeds of their infidel companions in arms. This forbearance of the Moslem general was afterwards distorted by the clergy into a stupendous miracle. The Mauritanian cavalry plundered the neighboring settlements and intercepted many parties of fugitives, including not a few ecclesiastics, whose faith in the supernatural virtues of the image and the relics of the saint vanished quickly before the gleaming lances of the Saracen cavalry.

The return of the army to Cordova was signalized by a military demonstration that rivalled the pomp of a Roman triumph. In the rear of the troops, chained together by fifties, thousands of Christian captives, laden with the spoils and trophies of victory, trudged painfully along. Some carried the sacrilegious plunder of many a venerated shrine. Others supported upon their shoulders the ponderous gates of the city of Santiago. Others, again, sank under the weight of the bells of the cathedral, into whose molten mass, as yet unformed, pious devotees of either sex had cast their treasure and their jewels; whose clangor had solemnized the installation of many a prelate and the sepulture of many a saint; had aroused the enthusiasm and the devotion of pilgrims of every clime; had, until this fatal hour, been heard in a land believed to be exempt from the outrages of the infidel, but were now destined to be exhibited in his greatest temple as tokens of the supremacy attained by the most implacable foe of Christianity. In the addition to the Great Mosque, then building under the direction of Al-Mansur, these souvenirs of the most memorable campaign undertaken by the arms of the Western

Khalifate were deposited, amidst the frenzied acclamations of the people. The gates were used to form a portion of the ceiling, and from them, sustained by chains of bronze, the great bells were hung inverted, to be utilized as lamps during the ceremonies of the numerous festivals prescribed by the Moslem ritual.

The career of the Mauritanian rebel Zira-Ibn-Atia, whom the prodigality of the Sultana Aurora had enabled to assert his independence, under pretext of liberating the Khalif, was not of long duration. The first army sent over by Al-Mansur to chastise his insolence met with disaster. The second, commanded by his own son, Abd-al-Melik-al-Modhaffer, vanquished the forces of Zira after a desperate struggle. The latter, with the loss of his possessions, was also stripped of his power, and died soon after of wounds received in battle.

Early in the spring of the year 1002 the indefatigable Al-Mansur again invaded the territory of the Christians. This time his hostility was directed against the shrine of St. Emilian, the patron saint of Castile, whose church was in the village of Canales. The town, the chapel, and the convents, with all their paraphernalia of priestly imposture and superstition, were destroyed. But the renowned commander, whose prowess had so long sustained the reputation of the Moslem arms, had fought his last campaign. A painful malady, whose cause was unknown, and whose symptoms baffled the skill of the best physicians of Cordova, had some months before attacked him. The exposure and excitement of this expedition increased its violence. The illustrious sufferer became so weak that he was forced to travel in a litter. It was evident from his emaciated form and incessant agony that he was fast approaching his end. At Medina-Celi the army halted. Its general could proceed no farther. A universal feeling of sorrow arose as the sad tidings of the condition of the dying chieftain spread throughout the camp.

The memory of the turbulent populace of the capital, and the consciousness that it had required all the energy of his determined character to triumph over his domestic enemies, embittered the last moments of Al-Mansur. He dreaded the inauguration of anarchy and the resultant partition of the khalifate. He was only too well acquainted with the instability of the vast and magnificent fabric of greatness which his genius had reared. With a view to preserve as long as possible for his sons the power he was unable to legally transmit, he directed Abd-al-Melik to hasten at once to Cordova and assume command of the garrison. To his second son, Abd-al-Rahman, he transferred his authority over the army. Many wise injunctions were imparted by their dying parent to these two young officers, whose military character had been formed under his own eye during many eventful campaigns. The elder, who was not an unworthy descendant of so great a sire, profited largely by his opportunities. The younger, unequal to the task of government, was destined to realize the worst expectations his acquaintances had formed of his erratic and licentious nature.

His instructions ended, the strength of Al-Mansur gave way, and he received with calm resignation the inexorable summons of the Angel of Death. For years he had entertained a presentiment that he should end his days at the head of his army, perhaps in the heat of battle. It was not only his hope, but he made it the subject of his daily petitions, that Allah would vouchsafe to him the glorious privilege of dying in war against the infidel, thereby to merit the recompense of martyrdom. In expectation of a favorable answer to his prayers, the arrangements for his burial were always ready. His shroud was invariably included among the effects of his camp equipage. It was of linen made from flax grown on his paternal estate at Torrox and woven by the hands of his own daughters. His conscience told him that the material thus produced and prepared was not tainted with the bloody reminiscences that popular report insinuated too often attached to his other possessions. The provident statesman, whose aspirations were not confined to matters terrestrial, and carrying into his relations with Allah the same prudence which had distinguished his earthly career, neglected no precaution to insure his salvation. A well-known text of the Koran declares that he who appears before the Almighty with the dust of the Holy War upon his feet shall be exempt from the tortures of eternal fire. To secure this advantage on the Day of Judgment, Al-Mansur carried with him in all his campaigns a silver casket of elegant design, into which, every evening when the army halted, his attendants carefully collected the dust which had accumulated upon his garments during the day. Enveloped in the shroud prepared for so many years, and sprinkled with this holy dust, the body of the great Moslem general was laid at rest in the city of Medina-Celi.

The character of Mohammed-Ibn-Amir-Al-Mansur has already been partially delineated in these pages. In it both good and evil were unsparingly mingled. Beyond measure shrewd, politic, audacious, and resolute, he was an adept in instigating others to the commission of discreditable acts by which he profited, while his instruments alone endured the odium attaching to them. By the irresistible force of intellect he had risen from obscurity to the enjoyment of imperial power. No act of wanton cruelty ever polluted his administration. Yet such was his firmness and the fear in which he was held that no sedition during his ascendency disturbed the peace of the khalifate. His conduct on all occasions where his personal interests were not immediately concerned was, for the most part, guided by the principles of equity. His own son was sacrificed to the maintenance of public order. The deeds of violence and tyranny for which he was so grossly abused were the results of political necessity,—measures suggested by the pressing exigencies of the occasion, and dictated by the instinct of self-preservation. Born in a comparatively humble rank of life, his matrimonial alliances were sought by princes. The daughters of Bermudo, King of the Asturias, and Sancho, King of Navarre, were inmates of his harem. Despite his talents as a statesman and his long series of military triumphs, his popularity was superficial, and his position was maintained with difficulty. He was everywhere designated by the significant and opprobrious nickname of "The Fox." His old literary associates envied and maligned him. The courtiers were jealous of his rapidly acquired fame, and sedulously depreciated his abilities. The eunuchs justly attributed to his agency the impairment of their political fortunes, and held him in detestation as the relentless enemy of their caste. The aristocracy sneered at his pretensions and privately denounced him as an insolent parvenu. The fanatical populace repeated his alleged atheistic speeches with pious horror, a feeling which even his ostentatious charity and apparently strict observance of the duties of a faithful Mussulman could not counteract. Inconsistent with the encouragement of literature, as the narrow policy which delivered the scientific works of the library of Al-Hakem to the tender mercies of ignorant bigots would seem to indicate, Al-Mansur was, nevertheless, a munificent patron of letters. His house was so frequented by men of genius and literary proclivities that it was compared to an academy. He often visited the University, listened to the lectures of the teachers, and rewarded the proficiency of the students. By his express orders the recitations were not suspended either at his entrance or his departure. Many of the most accomplished scholars of the East and West continued under his auspices, as they had done under those of Al-Hakem, to adorn the court, and to delight with their learning the critical and fastidious society of Cordova. A special fund, appropriated from the public treasury, was assigned for the support of these distinguished guests of the State. Famous grammarians, poets, and historians, who found this a lucrative field for the exercise of their talents, took up their residence in the capital. The reputations of the physicians and surgeons of Andalusia, now greater than ever, had long since spread to the remotest borders of Europe. Whenever Al-Mansur undertook an expedition, there followed in his train a number of bards and chroniclers, who could without delay record his achievements, and celebrate in the most stirring and pathetic strains of which the poesy of the Desert was capable the valor, the generosity, the piety, of the renowned champion of the Moslem faith. Forty-one of the most accomplished literary men of the empire accompanied the army for this purpose during the Catalonian campaign.

The enlargement of the Mosque, whose size was doubled by the additions of Al-Mansur, was undertaken quite as much to restore his failing credit with the ministers of religion as to accommodate the vast and increasing crowds which on Fridays assembled in the House of God. The land required for the extension was paid for at twice the valuation, already sufficiently exorbitant, estimated by the owners themselves. In the garden of an old woman, whose premises it was absolutely necessary for the architect to secure, stood a magnificent palm. At first she obstinately refused to sell her property, but after repeated solicitations she consented to exchange it for another residence in whose grounds was a tree of equal size and beauty. But even amidst the tropical vegetation of the environs of Cordova such a condition was not easily complied with. At length, in the vicinity of Medina-al-Zahrâ, an estate which possessed the desired requisite was procured at a fabulous price.

In imitation of his predecessors the khalifs, Al-Mansur performed for weeks the duties of a common laborer on the foundation and the superstructure of the Mosque. This addition, still intact, constructed of coarse materials and unsymmetrical in form, is readily distinguishable from the rest of the interior, whose sweeping horseshoe arches and exquisite decorations are models of grace and beauty. So meritorious was this work considered by the Mussulman theologians, that they declared that its accomplishment alone was sufficient to obtain for its author a seat in Paradise.

The energy of Al-Mansur was far from being consumed in military expeditions and the pursuit of glory. In the frequent intervals of peace his efforts were largely directed to improving the condition of his subjects, the highest and most noble title to distinction to which a ruler can aspire. He reformed the abuses which had crept into the administration of justice. He checked the peculations which were exhausting the treasury, by the institution of a rigid system of accounts and the severe punishment of dishonest officials. He sternly rebuked the intolerance of zealots who attempted to establish, without his sanction, a policy of persecution for opinions which they considered heretical. With his advent to power, the malignant influence of the eunuchs was no longer felt in the precincts of the court, and the uneasy genius of this pernicious class was diverted from the tortuous paths of political intrigue to the harmless and pleasing occupations of literature and art. He improved the breed of horses by the importation of the purest blood of Arabia. There was scarcely a river in Andalusia which could not boast of a bridge either built or repaired by the orders of the able and tireless minister. New highways were opened. Old ones were widened and extended. By these wise acts of public utility not only was the march of troops facilitated, but the trade of country and city was prodigiously increased, with a corresponding diminution of the price of provisions, whose abundance and cheapness materially benefited all classes of the population. The best commentary on his transcendent abilities is found in the fact that the empire which he had ruled with such glory and success perished with him. His majestic personality dominated everything. In the history of Islam no similar example of universally recognized individual superiority has ever been recorded. This extraordinary genius seemed impregnable to the temptations which usually assail the favorites of fortune. He was addicted to none of those unnatural vices whose practice defiled the characters of even the greatest of the Ommeyades. His harem was maintained rather as an accessory to his dignity than as an instrument of his pleasures. His amour with Aurora, which had provoked the sarcastic jests of the populace, had been from first to last a mere matter of policy. The passion of the Sultana he had deliberately used as the instrument of his ambition; when it had served his purpose it was as deliberately cast aside. With every opportunity for the accumulation of untold wealth, Al-Mansur acquired no more than was necessary to sustain the pomp incident to his exalted rank. Avarice had no place in his nature. His own treasure as well as that of the government he freely dispensed in charitable donations. The slightest act of extortion committed by one of his subordinates was met with chastisement that barely left the offender with life. No one who had merited his gratitude was ever forgotten in the distribution of official honors. No one whose insolence had at any time provoked his indignation went unpunished. In the accomplishment of his ambition, he persistently ignored the most obvious principles of morality. In his administration of petty offices of the inferior magistracy and of the highest employments of the state alike, he ordinarily observed the rules of the most impartial justice. After every victory gained by his arms he liberated hundreds of slaves.

A delusive appearance of moderation is suggested by the conduct of Al-Mansur, when we reflect that he denied himself the more than regal prestige which attached to the name of Commander of the Faithful. There is no doubt, however, that he ardently coveted that distinction. The possession of the substance of power did not satisfy his lofty aspirations. He arrogated to himself the remaining titles of the Khalif, as he had already appropriated the latter's prerogatives. He substituted his own seal for that of the injured Hischem. He boldly assumed the right to appoint his son to the office of prime minister, the very employment from which he himself derived his entire authority. The brilliancy of his achievements, the extent of his renown, the autocratic exertion of his power, had awed and dazzled his subjects, but had not secured their attachment. The masses openly applauded and secretly detested him. The various nations composing the population of Moorish Spain, while mutually hostile in many respects, were firmly united in their reverence for the inalienable rights of the crown. The religious character which invested the Khalif deepened and intensified this feeling. The sagacity of Al-Mansur did not suffer him to be deluded with the idea that he could violate with impunity the most sacred opinions and prejudices of the people. Moreover, an ancient tradition, universally believed, declared that a change of the dynasty portended the speedy destruction of the khalifate. The man who in defiance of these ideas could attempt open usurpation was a public enemy, something worse, if possible, than a traitor. For these cogent reasons, therefore, Al-Mansur did not seize the royal office, which, had he been able to assume it, might perhaps have retained the succession in his own family. As it was, he weakened the veneration entertained for the principle of legitimacy, without acquiring for his descendants any permanent advantage in return for the sacrifice. No one realized these facts so thoroughly as himself. The future of the empire engrossed his thoughts. It presented itself to his mind amidst the deliberations of the Divan, in the literary discussions of the University, in the manœuvres on the field of battle. It disturbed his slumbers. It embittered his dying moments. The mortal torture he endured from the reflection that by his agency the integrity of the khalifate had been irretrievably impaired, and that he could not transmit the inheritance of his glory, was almost as intense as any he could have experienced through remorse for crimes perpetrated in the pursuit of his unrighteous ambition.

The history of the campaigns of Al-Mansur differs materially from that of the military enterprises of his predecessors. Heretofore, in all important wars, the Christians were the aggressors. But under the minister of Hischem the Moslems always led the attack. Other rulers had negotiated treaties either prompted by victory or compelled by defeat. In twenty-five years he never made terms with the infidel. His success became habitual, and infused a just confidence into his own followers, while in a corresponding degree it disheartened the enemy. Almost for the first time in the annals of Islam the peremptory injunction of the Koran was fulfilled to the letter. The effects of one campaign were not repaired before the calamities of another were at hand. The frontier to the Christian states receded. The great cities of Zamora, Leon, Astorga, Barcelona, Pampeluna, Santiago were levelled with the dust. Cathedrals and monasteries were plundered of wealth bestowed by pious sovereigns and generations of grateful devotees. The incomes of the priesthood ceased on account of the devastation of their estates. With the ruin of the religious houses and the impoverishment of their occupants, the Christian worship declined. The prestige of the ecclesiastical order was weakened, and over an extensive region once abounding with churches and convents scarcely a reminiscence of Christianity survived. By the successive desecration of the two holiest shrines in Europe, the faith of the multitude in the boasted efficacy of relics, in the celestial intercession of saints, and even in the value of religion itself, was seriously shaken. The misfortunes of the clergy—who still, however, retained a portion of their ancient discipline—reacted on the other divisions of society, already sufficiently demoralized. The monarch and the nobles evinced a disposition to resist the insolent demands of the priesthood, and have been, in consequence, anathematized by prelates and defamed by chroniclers. The king seized without ceremony the property of his subjects. The barons plundered the royal estates, and cast lots for the serfs and the flocks which they had appropriated. In less than twenty years the Christians lost all they had gained in the previous three hundred. Even the defiles of their mountains were occupied by Moorish garrisons, and the Asturian peasant was compelled to purchase the uncertain privilege of procuring his own sustenance by the surrender of the larger share of the results of his labor. Such were the effects of the policy of Al-Mansur on the two rival nations of the Peninsula, a policy whose benefits perished with the author, but whose evils were destined to be augmented and perpetuated through a long period of national misfortune and disorder.

Berber immigration, encouraged by the conspicuous favor enjoyed by the African divisions of the army, as well as by the rich rewards of successful warfare, and which was fated to inflict such disasters upon the dismembered monarchy, increased beyond precedent during the administration of Al-Mansur. Entire tribes passed the Strait to share the tempting spoil of the Holy War. There was no room for these ferocious soldiers in the crowded cities. Even in the country, so thickly populated, space could hardly be found for their encampments. Their tents were pitched in the pastures and on the slopes of the sierra. Their fierce aspect appalled all who beheld them. Their costumes and their arms were strange and foreign. Ignorant of Arabic, the guttural accents of their Mauritanian dialect grated upon the ears of the polished Andalusian. In times of the greatest victories, when the people were intoxicated with success, there were discerning men who dreaded the ascendency of such dangerous allies. It was, however, the inexhaustible supply of African recruits which secured the unbroken series of triumphs that signalized the career of Al-Mansur. Their numbers were overwhelming. In a review held before an expedition into the North, six hundred thousand troops were mustered in the plain of Cordova.

The news of the death of the potent minister was received by the majority of the inhabitants of the capital with a feeling of exultation. With the multitude, his eminent services could not atone for the obscurity of his birth or the splendor of his fortune.

The animosities of contending sects, the jealousies of competing tradesmen, the envy of the masses towards the powerful, the disdain of the wealthy for the poor, were forgotten in the common desire to humiliate the family of the great chieftain through whose genius the Moslem empire had enjoyed such an extraordinary measure of prosperity and fame. An insurrection broke out. The mob, surrounding the palace, demanded that the Khalif in person should assume the direction of affairs. But the latter, who now, more than ever, felt his incompetency to govern, again voluntarily renounced the rights of sovereignty. The tumult increased; the garrison was called out, and Al-Modhaffer signalized his accession as hajib by the massacre of several hundred citizens. This example of severity was not soon forgotten; the spirit of revolt was crushed, and Al-Mansur, who on his death-bed had foreseen the occurrence of a similar catastrophe, thus averted by his prophetic wisdom a rebellion, which, unchecked, must have been productive of appalling consequences. The prince, Al-Modhaffer, inherited in no small degree the military talents and capacity for civil affairs possessed by his father, whose maxims he in the main adopted. Few details exist relative to his administration, which, however, was eminently popular and successful. The expeditions he made into the Christian territory were not attended with the brilliant results which characterized the exploits of his father. Neither profit nor glory could be derived from the invasion of a desert and the chase of bands of wandering robbers. These forays, however, served the useful purpose of intimidation, and impeded the recovery of the Christian power. Relieved from the prodigality and great military expenses incurred by the aggressive policy of Al-Mansur, the inexhaustible resources of the Peninsula were permitted to develop to the utmost. Commerce, manufactures, agriculture, flourished to a degree heretofore unknown. The rule of Al-Modhaffer is regretfully alluded to by subsequent writers as coincident with the golden age of Moslem annals.

After a reign of seven years, Al-Modhaffer died, under circumstances which raised a strong suspicion of poison. By a previous arrangement, which popular rumor suggested as the motive of his death, his office was transferred to his brother, Abd-al-Rahman. The latter was the offspring of a Christian princess, the daughter of Sancho, King of Navarre. By his vices and his blasphemy he had incurred the dislike of the people and provoked the execration of the theologians. The former, in memory of his infidel grandfather, fastened upon him the diminutive "Sanchol," an epithet of contempt. The latter recounted with indignant horror his immoderate indulgence in wine and his open ridicule of the sacred ceremonies of Islam. Aware of his unpopularity, Abd-al-Rahman nevertheless continued to outrage public sentiment, and made no attempt to gain the attachment of his subjects or to conciliate his ecclesiastical adversaries. He even had the audacity to ask of Hischem his investiture and acknowledgment as heir presumptive to the throne. The Khalif was prevailed upon, partly by sophistry, partly by threats, to comply with this extravagant and impolitic demand, and an edict was drawn up in due form and published, proclaiming the detested Sanchol heir to the titles and the authority of the illustrious dynasty of the Ommeyades.

No measure could have been devised by his most bitter enemy so fatal to the aspirations of its promoter as this concession wrung from a reluctant and persecuted sovereign. It was alike an insult to religion and to loyalty. It attacked the sacred character of the Successor of the Prophet, while attempting to abrogate the prerogatives which, in the eye of the devoted subject, were inseparable from the condition of sovereignty. Sanchol further increased the prevailing discontent by compelling the soldiers to discard the helmet for the turban, an innovation which, appropriating a distinctive portion of the attire of theologians, was generally regarded as a flagrant act of sacrilege.

Careless of public opinion, and confident of the stability of his power, Sanchol began to entertain aspirations to military distinction. He led an expedition into the Asturias, the results of which were not flattering to his vanity. The mountain defiles, filled with snow, impeded his progress, and the scarcity of provisions, which he had neglected to provide in sufficient quantities, finally compelled him to retreat. In the mean time Cordova was in revolt. A band of conspirators headed by Mohammed, a great-grandson of Abd-al-Rahman III., surprised the citadel. The unfortunate Hischem, the puppet of every faction, was compelled to abdicate. The religious fanatics and the populace hailed the change of government with extravagant expressions of joy, a feeling by no means shared by the wealthy and intelligent, who anticipated with undisguised concern the destructive tyranny of a succession of military adventurers.

The first act of Mohammed was the seizure of Zahira. The stronghold of the Amirides was entered and sacked by an infuriated rabble. For four days the beautiful palace founded by Al-Mansur was at the mercy of the revolutionists and outlaws of the capital. The long rows of villas, which, embosomed in shady groves of palm- and orange-trees, stretched away to the Guadalquivir, were visited with the same destruction. Everything portable, even to the woodwork, was removed. No estimate could be made of the plunder secured by the mob, who ransacked every apartment; but the soldiers of Mohammed delivered to their master two million one hundred thousand pieces of silver and a million five hundred thousand pieces of gold. The torch was then applied and the entire suburb was reduced to ashes. The stones were gradually appropriated for the construction of other buildings, and in a few years the memory as well as the ruins of the seat of the Amirides had completely vanished.

When the intelligence of these events was transmitted to Sanchol at Toledo, he set out at once with his army for Cordova. The march had scarcely begun before he experienced the full extent of his unpopularity, which heretofore he had refused to believe. His force was diminished daily by desertions. Many of the soldiers who remained refused to obey their officers. At a short distance from the capital, the Berbers, on whom he placed his main reliance, left the camp at midnight, and morning found the commander with a slender retinue, whose number did not equal that of his ordinary body-guard. Notwithstanding these ominous indications, the infatuation of Sanchol, who fancied that the people of Cordova would, by the mere effect of his presence, be induced to return to their allegiance, urged him on to his ruin. He was seized by the troops of Mohammed, beheaded, his body clothed in rags and nailed to a stake, and then placed with the head—which was impaled on a pike—in one of the most public quarters of the city. With the death of Sanchol, the rule of the Amirides, who, in a subordinate capacity, had for a generation exercised despotic power, and whose policy was destined to visit upon their countrymen a long series of misfortunes, terminated forever.

The pernicious effects of the practical usurpation of Al-Mansur now became apparent. The ambition of every aspiring partisan was encouraged by the example of that gifted leader whose extraordinary talents had raised him to such a height of affluence and renown.

Mohammed was no sooner fairly seated upon the throne, when the populace again began to murmur. The excitement of revolution, once enjoyed, was too pleasant to be abandoned for the severe restraints of law and social order. And in reality only too much cause existed for popular dissatisfaction. The new sovereign was cruel, rapacious, dissolute. He took the heads of rebellious vassals sent him by his generals, had them cleansed, and the skulls—in which flowers had been planted—arranged in fantastic designs in the garden of his palace. His drunken and licentious orgies were the reproach of the court. He alienated the theologians, who soon discovered that they had made a bad exchange for even the dissipated and impious Sanchol. He persecuted the Berbers, who had inherited the vices and the unpopularity of the eunuchs, but who for a quarter of a century had been the support of the monarchy. To avoid the possible restoration of Hischem, he publicly announced his death, substituted for his corpse that of a Christian killed for the occasion, and who bore a striking likeness to the Khalif, and celebrated his obsequies with all the magnificence due to departed royalty. The performance of the rites of Mussulman burial over the body of an infidel was, in the eyes of every true believer, a deed of unparalleled infamy. The unpopularity of Mohammed increased daily. A sedition broke out headed by Hischem, a grandson of Abd-al-Rahman III., who boldly demanded the crown of his kinsman. The usurper pretended to accede, and secretly despatched emissaries to incite the Berbers to plunder the capital. The scheme was successful; at the first appearance of these detested foreigners in the market-place, the tradesmen arose in a body and, aided by the royal body-guard, drove the Africans from the city. The pretender was taken in the confusion attending the skirmish and immediately executed.

His place was filled by Suleyman, another prince of the Ommeyade line. Negotiations were entered into with the Count of Castile, who, in consideration of the surrender of certain territory, agreed to furnish a large contingent of men and horses. As soon as their organization was effected, the Berbers marched on the capital. A battle was fought on the plain of Cantich, but the disorderly rabble of Cordova were unable to resist the fierce onset of the African cavalry, and ten thousand of the partisans of Mohammed fell by the sword or perished in the Guadalquivir. Mohammed then liberated Hischem, whose supposed corpse he had buried, resigned his dignity, and proclaimed the son of Al-Hakem sovereign of Spain. But the ruse had no effect. The Cordovans admitted the Berbers, and Suleyman occupied the palace of the khalifs.

Henceforth the story of the Peninsula is one of anarchy and ruin. Every province, every hamlet, was a prey to the hatred of contending parties intensified by the daily infliction of mutual outrages. Christian mercenaries, paid with the plunder of the enemy, served in the armies of both factions. The peasantry were robbed and butchered without mercy. Cordova was repeatedly sacked by the Catalan auxiliaries, by the Berbers, by ruthless mobs of its own citizens. It endured all the privations of a protracted siege, all the unspeakable horrors of famine and pestilence. While the capital was invested by the Berbers, the suburb of Medina-al- Zahrâ was taken by these savage warriors. Every being within its limits was slaughtered. The favorite seat of the khalifs, on whose construction for forty years the wealth of the empire had been lavished by Abd-al-Rahman and Al-Hakem, was utterly destroyed. The treasury was empty, and Wadhih, the governor of Cordova under Hischem,—who had again been made khalif,—was forced to sell the greater portion remaining of the library of Al-Hakem to obtain money to pay his troops. At length the Berbers took the city by assault. The inhabitants dearly expiated the predilection for revolt which they had so frequently manifested. The butchery was frightful. Families conspicuous for wealth were reduced in a few hours to abject poverty. The gutters ran with blood. Heaps of unburied corpses encumbered the streets. The famous scholars who had been attracted to Spain from every country in the world perished almost to a man. No considerations of mercy, policy, or religion restrained the brutal instincts of the victors. Women and children were cut down or trampled to death. Crowds of trembling suppliants, who had sought refuge in the mosques, were massacred. The sanctity of the harems was violated with every attendant circumstance of lust and cruelty. Palaces erected by the ambition of a proud and opulent nobility were burned to ashes. With the accession of Suleyman, an edict confiscating the property of the citizens whom the public misfortunes had least affected, and banishing the owners, was promulgated, and the ferocious Africans, who had dealt such a fatal blow to the civilization of Europe, and in a few months had overturned a fabric which the intelligence and energy of a line of great princes had hardly been able to complete in two hundred years, appropriated the seraglios, and installed themselves in the few remaining mansions whose luxurious appointments and magnificent gardens had long been the boast of the Moslem capital.

The dismemberment of the empire now progressed with appalling rapidity. The chiefs of both factions constantly solicited the aid of the Christians for the destruction of their adversaries. For a time their entreaties were heeded, but with each application the surrender of territory, whose fortresses constituted the security of the frontier provinces of the khalifate, was required. With the increasing distress of the party whose nominal head was Hischem, the demands of the Leonese and Castilian chieftains became more exacting. At length the Count of Castile threatened that, unless all the strongholds taken and fortified by Al-Mansur were delivered to him, he would join the Berbers with the entire force at his command. The cowardice of the government of Cordova impelled it to make this disgraceful concession. A great number of fortified places won by the valor of Al-Mansur's veterans were evacuated by the Saracen garrisons. Encouraged by the example of Sancho, the petty sovereigns of Leon and Navarre sent similar messages to Cordova. The incompetent Wadhih, who exercised the royal power in the name of the Khalif, terrified by these empty menaces, hastened to purchase temporary immunity for the capital by the sacrifice of the remaining bulwarks of the frontier. It was not long before the Christian princes, without striking a blow or giving any equivalent, recovered the territory which all the courage and obstinacy of their fathers had not been able to retain.

The occupation of Cordova by Suleyman was far from obtaining for him the submission of the remaining cities of the khalifate. The excesses committed by the Berbers, and the employment of the hated infidels of Castile, arrayed almost the entire population against him. The strongholds of the North, through the pusillanimous conduct of the imperial officials, were irretrievably lost. The governors of the eastern and western provinces proclaimed their independence. Thousands of prosperous villages were destroyed; and the plains so recently covered with luxuriant vegetation again assumed the desolate appearance they possessed during the disastrous civil wars of the emirate. So complete was this devastation, that it was said one could travel for many days northward from Cordova and not encounter a single human being.

Upon the arrival of Ali, Suleyman's successor, at the capital, a thorough search was made for the Khalif Hischem, but without success. The corpse buried by Mohammed was exhumed, but was not identified as that of the unfortunate prince. Diligent inquiry failed to elicit any reliable intelligence concerning the missing monarch. The same uncertainty envelops the end of the last of the Ommeyades that attaches to the fate of the last of the Visigoths. Both were the degenerate heirs of a dynasty of illustrious sovereigns. One lost his crown and his life directly through the oppression he inflicted on his subjects; the other indirectly through tyranny endured from an unnatural relative and an ungrateful minister. Both perished by treason, and each disappeared in the final catastrophe which overwhelmed his kingdom. The Khalif Hischem was never seen after the Berbers sacked the capital. An idle tradition asserted that he escaped the carnage of that dreadful day and found a refuge in Asia. It is more probable, however, that he was killed in the confusion of the assault, and that his body, stripped and unrecognized, was consigned, with those of thousands of his subjects, to an unknown grave. With him ended the prosperity, the affluence, the glory of the line of the Ommeyades. Henceforth, the khalifate, broken into a multitude of independent and often hostile principalities, offered an easy prey to the enterprise of the Christians, whose costly experience had finally taught them the imperative necessity of concerted union.

END OF VOLUME I.

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